UNEMPLOYMENT AS SOCIAL DEATH: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED MEN FROM AN EMBODIED PERSPECTIVE

H E TRACEY

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UNEMPLOYMENT AS SOCIAL DEATH: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED MEN FROM AN EMBODIED PERSPECTIVE

HELEN ELIZABETH TRACEY

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Abstract

This thesis explores how older men use metaphors to express what it is like to live through extreme periods of long-term unemployment. These metaphors are viewed from a phenomenological, embodied perspective, based on the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as an appeal to recognise lived experience that is not reflected in the dominant discourse which blames unemployed people for their own situation. This lived experience is evoked through a rich depth of experiential material drawn from one year's ethnographic research with unemployed men undertaking supervised job search in a deprived area of Newcastle, England. Within this context, the central metaphor of death is understood to originate in disciplinary practices, which are interpreted via the theories of Michel Foucault as attempts to homogenise the long-term unemployed as deviant and thereby in need of control. The men's stories of being treated as animals, meat, corpses and scum add to existing analyses of death as a metaphor for unemployment. Interpreting these metaphors by drawing upon the concept of social death provides an understanding of how the long-term unemployed are framed as being at the bottom of, or outside, the social order. Contrary to existing conceptions of social death as applying to only the most extreme circumstances, this thesis supports the men's expressions as indicating social death as they are not recognised as worthy of reciprocal recognition from employers and Jobcentre workers. The men resist the negative character finalisation inherent in these practices through 'fun', which is understood via Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque as allowing them to temporarily tear down the social hierarchy by ridiculing the official perspective on unemployment. The significance of this study is that it addresses a recognised gap in research regarding jobseeker resistance.

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Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty Ethics Committee on 12 September 2017, submission reference number 865.

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 85,778 words

Name: Helen Elizabeth Tracey

Signature:

Date: 26 May 2021

1.0. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This thesis seeks to understand the lived experiences of older, long-term unemployed men, and how they make sense of this experience. There are three main aspects of this research. First, it explores how neo-liberal capitalist discourse frames the long-term unemployed as being at the bottom of, or outside, the social order. This situates the study within an existing literature that draws significantly on Michel Foucault's theories of power and discipline. Second, metaphors are described as a means of expressing how it feels to be a long-term unemployed man in line with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of expression as reflecting bodily lived experience. Each metaphorical expression is broadly interpreted as indicating that being positioned at the bottom of, or outside, the social order feels like death. Third, it is analysed how Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour are used to defeat this metaphorical death by temporarily tearing down, degrading and ridiculing the existing social order. This thesis seeks to contribute to existing uses of metaphors within the unemployment literature by taking an embodied perspective that foregrounds the body as both the target of power and the locus of difference. This is achieved by building upon the comprehensive Foucauldian governmentality literature, which critiques the state administration of unemployment, and by utilising two theorists which are less typically drawn upon in unemployment research: Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin.

In essence, this thesis explores what Bakhtin (1984a: 190) termed a, 'double-voiced discourse' because it investigates how older long-term unemployed men negotiate the structures that seek to finalise their character and thus place limits and conditions on who they are allowed to be and the stories they are allowed to tell. However, in a Merleau-Pontian research spirit, it seeks to overcome, as far as possible, dualisms which separate experience into opposed categories, and thereby preserve the ambiguity that characterises lived experience. Therefore, it is too simplistic to conclude that the long-term unemployed are either compliant or non-compliant, passive or resistive. Instead, it is determined that one of the most important issues for the unemployed men in this study is that they receive a reciprocal, ethical response from those who administer their claim for welfare support as well as employers

receiving their job applications. The men lack opportunities to enter into meaningful and purposeful dialogue about their situation: they receive no feedback or interview invitations from their many job applications and are constrained in their ability to confront Jobcentre practices that homogenise them as deviant. These experiences are interpreted using the concept of social death, which is an imposed status that silences identities which do not fit with the current social order to enforce compliance or permanent exclusion. Building upon Kralova's (2018) model, it is proposed that nonreciprocity and absence of dialogue are central to the experience of social death. Laughter is established as a collective means of defeating this death (Bakhtin, 1984b: 299), and is thus a survival strategy.

As a phenomenological study, this research did not start from the position of viewing unemployment as a problem to be resolved by re-employment. Instead, an attitude of wonder was adopted towards the phenomenon which aimed, as far as possible, to understand unemployment as it is lived through by the body. An ethnographic research approach was adopted utilising non-participatory observation and participatory visual research with a group of seven long-term unemployed men and their two female Case Workers. This extended over one year, allowing a rich depth of experiential material to be produced. This was reflected upon using dialogical narrative analysis, which is a form of narrative analysis influenced by Bakhtin that sees speech as purposeful, with Frank's (1990, 1995, 2005, 2010, 2012) dialogical narrative analysis of illness stories being particularly relevant. The ethnography is presented in the form of stories, told as part of vignettes that retain dialogue and evoke lived experience.

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the research and its contributions by situating it in the wider literature. It explains the embodied research perspective as an approach which enables the body to be foregrounded, providing a greater understanding of material concerns that are neglected in economic and psychological perspectives. The research questions are presented within the specific context of where the research took place, in an urban area considered marginalised due to high levels of deprivation and unemployment. An overview of each of the three key theorists: Foucault,

Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin, is provided and it is explained how they fit with this research. Finally, an overview of each of the following four chapters is outlined.

1.2. Stories About Unemployment

It can be difficult to hear stories about unemployment, due to established ideas about what an unemployment story should sound like. A good story is expected to have an appropriate ending, which long-term unemployment does not have. When asked directly what it is like to experience long-term unemployment, the answer may instead be simple but expressive: a range of expletives or otherwise to be told, 'you don't wanna know' (FN 710[1]). The former of these is perhaps the least surprising. Unemployment is widely acknowledged to be an unpleasant experience. The latter speaks of a widespread social refusal to hear alternative stories about unemployment and the shame that is socially expected from people who talk about such experiences. The accounts that unemployed people are usually required to give, typically to prove their eligibility for welfare support, are highly normalised. As such, there is only one acceptable story to tell about unemployment. As with Frank's (1995) illness stories that are expected to end in cure and recovery, stories of unemployment must demonstrate progress and end in re-employment.

Stories are told with, and for, others because, as both Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin indicated, it is through others that we come to know ourselves (see section 3.2.3.). However, employment is not just how socially valued behaviours, such as self-reliance, can be demonstrated. Employment is the very basis of social ordering and differentiation. Conversely, the close association between long-term unemployment, poverty, and numerous negative character traits, such as having a poor attitude which is not oriented to work or the future, means unemployed people are typically perceived as idle timewasters. It is therefore difficult for the long-term unemployed to account for how they spend their time, as undertaking activities other than those which prepare them for re-employment risks them being accused of, 'doing nothing' (Boland, 2015a: 17). In Bakhtin's (1984a) sense, they are cut off from dialogue

[1] References beginning "FN" denote a location within the field notes generated via the observation which informs this ethnography. Please refer to Methodology Chapter, section 3.6.1.3. 'Field Notes'.

about who they are, because who they are is externally imposed. This contrasts with more privileged accounts of unemployment where individuals are responsible for constructing their own identity, such as through ‘identity play’ (for example, Shepherd & Williams, 2018) and thus framing unemployment as, ‘funemployment’ (Pignault & Houssemand, 2018: 361). Essentially, the long-term unemployed are told who they are by society, rather than having much opportunity to explain it themselves. This makes the individual feel as if they are, ‘already quite dead’ (Bakhtin, 1984a: 58) which has implications for how the stories of the long-term unemployed are to be heard and understood.

As Frank (1995: 2) has emphasised, stories are told not only about the body, but also through the body, and that the latter is much more difficult to discern. This difficulty is rooted in the tendency to think of experiences psychologically, viewing the body as a more neutral background (Leder, 1990a: 25). This dualism of mind and body is what embodied research seeks to challenge by recognising that the world is first experienced bodily before it is reflected upon by the mind. The body is thereby both that which ties us to the world, and the ground of our ability to transcend it. However, this is only possible if the body can habitually operate without the necessary intervention of consciousness. If the body is foregrounded, or foregrounds itself, it is difficult to ignore it in favour of psychological concerns. This can occur when people confront social norms, which bring attention to their body as the locus of difference. There is an extensive embodied research tradition of exploring this in relation to several characteristics such as gender, disability and race. In particular, feminist embodied research has critiqued the subordination of the female body, perceived as inferior to the rational masculine mind (Davis, 1997: 5). Embodied research has also been prominent where the body has a clear presence and relevance. This includes situations in which it foregrounds itself because it is suffering poor health or illness (Frank, 1990, 1995), and those in which the body is foregrounded, but not necessarily in conscious awareness, such as sport (e.g. Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012), dance (e.g. Purser, 2018) and meditation (e.g. Pagis, 2009). Embodied research has also extended into disciplines which have more traditionally been concerned with the mind, such as education (e.g. Ord & Nuttall, 2016; Thorburn & Stolz, 2020). The consequence of these embodied “turns” has been to re-invigorate neglected

aspects of research, such as understanding experience as fundamentally situated, context dependent and inter-relational. Most relevant is the recent return to embodied research in work and employment that has revealed the neglect of gender and social class, leaving, ‘an important gap’ (Slutskaya, Simpson, Hughes, Simpson & Uygur, 2016) in research about the experiences of lower skilled men. Similarly, research by Gist-Mackay (2018; Dougherty, Schraedley, Gist-Mackay & Wickert, 2018; Gist-Mackay & Guy, 2019) has revealed unemployed job search training as disembodied, lacking consideration of material poverty, and thus neglecting classed and material concerns associated with unemployment. These gaps support the necessity of further embodied research into the experiences of long-term unemployed men.

1.3. An Embodied Research Perspective

The embodied research perspective adopted in this thesis is based on the fundamental entanglement of body and world, drawing significantly upon Merleau-Ponty’s ontology and epistemology. While this is outlined in the Methodology Chapter (section 3.2. ‘Ontology and Epistemology’), it is also referred to throughout where relevant to make explicit connection with how experience is viewed according to this underpinning perspective. As such, stories, when viewed as being told from the body, speak of that body’s world. The close relation between body and world means that the body is not just *in* the world, the body *is* an inextricable part of the world. The body is the constant in all experience, and that experience is carried within the body. An embodied perspective is thus critical of the ideal, based on the philosophy of Rene Descartes, that experience is carried in the mind as memories and is verbalised externally as speech. Cartesianism implies an unfeasible level of individual control over the world, reflected in the relation to self prioritised by neo-liberal capitalism which has been termed the, ‘rational self’ (Low, 2010:199). These notions of self-governance, required by the dominant political and economic structures, are analysed in the Literature Review Chapter according to Foucault’s (2010: 92) theory of the development of neo-liberalism and governmentality which views the body as the target of power (Foucault, 1975/1991: 136). Contrary to Cartesianism, an embodied perspective recognises that an individual cannot impose meaning on the world because it is already inherently meaningful, as learning ties the body to its world via

‘intentional threads’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: 121). The breaking of these threads through sudden changes to the body or world, thereby damages this body world. Thus, from an embodied perspective it can be understood why economic restructuring in the UK, representing an increase in work that prioritises the mind, such as ‘knowledge work’ (Cox, 2018: 224-225), is traumatic for those socialised in manual labour because they had explicit bodily attachments to forms of work which have disappeared from their world.

1.4. Research Context

Manual labour has shaped the world of the male “informants” in this study, so called because, as in the traditional anthropological sense, the researcher participates in their world, rather than the other way around. The inner-city estate, where they have lived all their lives, is dominated by high-rise tower blocks, built to replace the terraces that housed workers at the many local factories, which have all since disappeared. Only some of the men worked in these industries, with most of the factories having closed while they were young, yet the industrial influence was still pervasive throughout their daily lives. From playing with factory parts and performing practical jokes on factory workers, to Working Men’s Clubs and their annual trips (FN 281, 284, 296, 358, 457, 534, 578, 632, 644, 668, 699, 737, 767-768, 811); the factories provided not just jobs, but the basis of their world. Even though it was, and is, lived against a backdrop of poverty and decline, it is the notion of sharing this experience with others that makes it liveable (see sections 4.2.2. and 4.4.1.). Thereby, although such areas are typically characterised by a lack of financial resources, these collective resources provide feelings of safety and support through habitual practice (Pylvanainen, 2003). The men are familiar with their world and, through other people, their world is familiar with them in a way other than the externally imposed singular stigmatised identity of “long-term unemployed”. This means that outside their world, the men struggle to receive recognition for their situation and are homogenised by the requirement that, to claim subsistence via welfare benefits, they must demonstrate they are available for work, and be actively seeking it, in accordance with the widely adopted International Labour Organization (ILO) definition of unemployment (Office for National Statistics, 2020a). If individuals are not looking for work, they are considered economically inactive and may not claim unemployment

related benefits. The term ‘workless’ includes both people defined as unemployed and those defined as economically inactive and tends to be used to describe households where no adults work. However, this study focuses on those classed as unemployed and thereby claiming related welfare benefit support payments, consisting of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and/or Universal Credit, who are typically referred to as ‘jobseekers’ and ‘claimants’. Unemployment welfare benefits are just one of a range of “social security” payments available to people who meet certain eligibility criteria. The political ideology informing the way in which welfare is governed, as well as the institutions which design and implement policies aligned with that regime, are commonly referred to as the, ‘welfare state’ (Bergqvist, Yngwe & Lundberg, 2013). Although unemployment is not the sole concern of the welfare state, it has been a key focus for welfare reform aimed at reducing dependency by ensuring an ‘active society’ (Dwyer, 2004) that puts ‘work first’ (Schulte, Greer, Umney, Symon & Iankova, 2017) rather than relying on welfare benefit payments. Institutionally, this ideology is enforced via the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) which is responsible for pensions and the administration of benefit payments in the UK (Department for Work and Pensions, n.d. -a), and Jobcentre Plus, which enacts DWP policy in dealing with benefits claims and providing work and employment services.

1.4.1. The Hitchcock Estate

The Hitchcock Estate[2], where the men featured in this study live, is typical of an area considered to be marginalised, and has existed this way for decades. The estate is close to the centre of Newcastle, a city located in the North East of England. Foucault’s notion of biopower, in which statistics allow population characteristics and behaviour to be compared to norms to justify problematisation, are particularly relevant to the men’s situation. The Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) where their estate is located is ranked as one of the most deprived in the country, being in the top one per cent of all areas in the UK for overall deprivation (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019). Within this, unemployment is prominent issue, the area

[2] ‘The Hitchcock Estate’ is a pseudonym. Names and functions of local places have been changed to support disguising the identity of the informants. See sections 3.8.1. ‘Informed Consent’ and 4.1.2. ‘Informants’.

being just outside the top 0.1 percent with regards to employment deprivation, and within the top 0.2 per cent for income deprivation (*ibid*.). Despite significant state investment in, and regeneration of, the estate over the last fifty years, particularly in the 1990s, unemployment levels have remained consistently high. The unemployment rate for all residents aged 16-64 years in the LSOA is 21%, which is more than four times the national rate of 5.1%[3]. The LSOA male unemployment rate (29%) is almost three times that of the female rate (11.66%) and the unemployment rate for men aged 50-64 years (18.5%) is over twice that of females aged 50-64 years (9%)[4]. This apparently strengthens the notion that the problem is the people because the issues remain despite external attempts to resolve them. The current Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic has generated a global unemployment crisis leading to an important focus on the widening gap between privileged and precarious experiences of work and unemployment which mean people living in poverty have been further marginalised (Blustein, Duffy, Ferreira, Cohen-Scali et al., 2020). While this research was completed before the pandemic and considers older long-term unemployment, rather than short-term and youth unemployment which is the focus of the current crisis, it remains relevant to considering how long-term unemployment and its impact can be lessened. In particular, individual blame and stigma, as well as lack of recognition of structural factors have compounded the experiences of the men in this study.

A focus on individual blame evidently benefits capitalist industry and employers by enabling them to move freely (Smith, 2010: 6, 152) without being required to make any reparations within those places it leaves behind. While the state has often filled this gap, its support of largely market-based intervention, underpinned by its aim to, 'govern for the market' (Foucault, 2010: 121) means that unemployment created by the movement of industry is not necessarily addressed by new investment in the area. For example, the recent construction nearby of a new sports arena was undertaken by contractors and thereby

[3] Figures calculated using the latest population data (mid-2019) and latest claimant count data (February 2021). Claimant count relates to people claiming unemployment benefits (Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit) and includes people currently not receiving benefit due to being sanctioned and therefore does not meet the International Labour Organisation definition of unemployment, but is the closest data available. Total data is for Great Britain. Data source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics.

[4] As per previous footnote.

lacked local employment opportunities. The stigmatisation of both place and people, rather than having the effect of pushing residents to find work, has left many of them permanently excluded. While the consideration of the role played by unemployment stigma in employer recruitment decisions is largely absent from economic and psychological perspectives on unemployment, it is a regular issue confronted by long-term unemployed job seekers. Research has demonstrated that after around thirty months of continuous unemployment, there is little point in making job applications as the possibility of re-employment is non-existent due to negative employer assumptions (Oberholzer-Gee, 2008), including the perception that long-term unemployment indicates lower motivation (Baert & Verhaest, 2019). All the men in this study have been continuously unemployed for periods significantly longer than this. Thus, the notion of defining long-term unemployment as twelve or more months, as is adopted by the UK and other governments who follow the definition of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021), hides considerable variation in circumstances which are not recognised in largely homogenised and psychologised approaches to re-employment that disregard the principal role of employer perceptions. While it is acknowledged that employment support provided by the Jobcentre and other subcontractors delivering related services can and does support people back into employment, the situation is complex for those who have been long-term unemployed for significant periods. It is this latter form of experience which is explored via this thesis.

1.5. Research Questions

This research was undertaken in accordance with a phenomenological research philosophy influenced by Merleau-Ponty. This involved adopting an attitude of wonder in relation to the problematisation of older, long-term unemployed men. Problematisation involves identifying non-compliance with social norms (Foucault, 1975/1991: 227) and is supported by biopower, involving statistical measurement of compliance (see section 2.2.5.). Statistics demonstrating higher levels of unemployment amongst men aged over 50 years, compared to women and younger people, identifies older long-term unemployed men as a population requiring intervention. Older long-term unemployed men not only contradict the social norm of being employed but

norms relating to masculinity, age and mobility. The statistics outlined in the previous section also identify the area where the men live as a place where such problematised cases are concentrated. Given the Hitchcock Estate was also the location of an established “Work Club” directed at supporting long-term unemployed men aged around 50 years and over, it was a very suitable location to explore this phenomenon. However, the attitude of wonder means that pre-existing assumptions about the nature of unemployment were questioned to enable an openness to the phenomena of long-term unemployment and how it is experienced by the older, long-term unemployed men attending the Work Club. Thus, based on the aim to uncover lived experience, the following three broad questions were developed to guide the research:

- How do older long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?
- What is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?
- How do older long-term unemployed men live through this experience?

The key methodological considerations made in designing the research to respond to the above questions are outlined in the following section.

1.5.1. Methodological Implications

Objectifying others, such as viewing them as homogenised cases within a statistical dataset, is more straightforward when the understanding of experience from a specific perspective is lacking. Seeing from the perspective of lived experience requires an appreciation of experience as fundamentally embodied, and thus situated within a particular context. Research access to interactions between unemployed people and the institutions implementing welfare policy is almost unknown in official spaces such as Jobcentres. The Work Club thereby provided the advantage that it took place in a public space within the Hitchcock Estate itself. The backgrounds of the men as growing up in the local area and having known each other for lengthy periods facilitated discussions about the broader context, both spatially and temporally, of their unemployment. An overall ethnographic research approach was adopted as ethnography is the evoking of lived experience through description based on extensive involvement in the ‘field’, or location, where the phenomenon occurs, known as ‘fieldwork’. The ethnography is presented in Chapter Four in the form of vignettes which retain, the way in which experience was storied through

dialogue. This both preserves the ambiguity of experience and grants the informants the right to utter the, '*final word*' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 54, italics in original) about themselves, which is an important consideration to enable the stories of the men to be approached ethically.

The following sections provide an overview of how the men's incompatibility with social norms places them at the bottom of, or outside, the social order. This is alluded to by the men through metaphorical bodily expressions, which describe how they feel treated, or viewed, as animals, meat, corpses and dirt. All the metaphors relate, not only to metaphorical death, but to the hierarchising tendencies that devalue and disallow their identities.

1.6. Hierarchising the Unemployed

Employment is used as other social norms to, 'hierachize [sic] individuals in relation to one another' (Foucault, 1975/1991: 223) which provides each with a fixed place according to degree of compliance. Employment remains the fundamental foundation for social ordering and is the basis of structural models of social class, and thus, in structural terms, those without employment and particularly the long-term unemployed appear to be a homogenous group of "the unemployed" outside the social order (see section 2.2.3.). The forms of work undertaken in the industries that moved away from the Hitchcock Estate would typically be designated as "working class", being performed by those who need to sell their labour to survive. Prior to their unemployment, the men had undertaken low-skilled and unskilled 'dirty work' (Davis, 1984), or manual labour which is physically arduous and invokes disgust via the senses, such as dealing with unpleasant matter, smells, sights and sounds. While workers are able to develop a sense of pride in tolerating such working conditions, those external to the place where such work is undertaken tend to view it as both physically and morally tainted (Ackroyd & Crowdy, 1990). However, it is important to note that such work still afforded a place in the social order, although it was towards the bottom. Conversely, unemployed people do not have a place in structural social class models (Atkinson, 2009) and are typically designated as an "underclass" (see section 2.2.3.). The research outlined in this thesis does not seek to apply any particular social class model or category to the men, or to locate them within any existing form of social structure.

Rather, it explores the general social processes and criteria used to frame the unemployed as being at the bottom of, or outside, different forms of social order.

While the norm of employment is the main criteria for classification, there are also other social norms that the unemployed men in this study do not meet, particularly in relation to gender and age (see section 2.2.5.). Thereby, long-term unemployment is not a single status with a straightforward solution. For the men, it is the convergence of various stigmas or identities that are viewed as incompatible with social norms. Due to its contradiction of social norms, it is an identity which must be disallowed by neo-liberalism capitalism, as Foucault (1998: 138) noted, 'to the point of death.'

1.7. Unemployment as Social Death

Foucault is not alone in drawing upon the notion of death to refer to an experience associated with the disallowance of identity. Having an identity imposed was described by Bakhtin (1984b: 58) as like being, 'already quite dead', and Merleau-Ponty (1964a; 68) defined being objectified by another's gaze as the closest experience to death. Thus, death as a metaphor alludes to experiences in which an individual sees, hears or even feels themselves to be told they do not fit with what is socially required, and therefore must change to meet those requirements. If an individual does not display an identity that is valued by neo-liberal capitalism, or directly contradicts its requirements, then they risk being labelled a "non-person", due to defying classification with the accepted social order. Non-person is a status which has been equated with social death (Sweeting & Gilhooly, 1991).

A key model of social death considered within this thesis is Kralova's (2018) three criteria typology for assessing whether social death has occurred, which provides a recent comprehensive consolidation of social death literature. When applied to long-term unemployment it could be argued that each of Kralova's three criteria: loss of social identity, loss of social connectedness and losses associated with the body, are met. However, this thesis proposes that the absence of reciprocity underpins each of these categories. Based upon Merleau-Ponty's theory of reversibility, or the ability to both see and be seen,

Johnson (2008) defined reciprocity as a choice to consider another of being worthy of an ethical relation. In the absence of this choice the relation is "deadened" (*ibid*.). This is likened to the similar experiences of being defined as a non-person, loss of personhood and social death. The metaphorical expressions used by the men indicate that the long-term unemployed may experience both a loss of identity and the absence of reciprocity, and thus in some cases, unemployment is more than just the loss of a role, as suggested by Kralova (2018: 6). This supports the argument for more nuance in determining whether social death has occurred which takes into account people's own interpretations of their experience, rather than applying set criteria. This is important because social death is rarely a choice: rather it is imposed to induce compliance or permanent exclusion.

1.8. Compliance or Permanent Exclusion

Social death is imposed on individuals by treating them as if they are dead. This involves being cut off from dialogue about who they see themselves to be, which with regards to unemployment is because it is an identity disallowed by neo-liberal capitalism. Due to neo-liberal capitalism's focus on the future, reference to past selves based on forms of employment and relations removed by economic restructuring are dismissed as nostalgia. Institutionalisation, which for unemployed people in the UK in enacted by Jobcentre Plus, is a means by which former identities are disallowed and new ones are imposed. Goffman (1957: 49-50) referred to this process as, 'mortification', a term also aligned with social death. The welfare state, as both the approach and institutional delivery of welfare, imposes surveillance and supervision, both directly and via the self, enabling compliance to be monitored, and non-compliance to be disciplined.

Exclusion may also be enforced via spatial separation. High-rise housing like the Hitchcock Estate is often utilised as a 'dumping ground' (Moran, 2004; 615) for the perceived dysfunctional elements of society in order to contain and fix them in place (Burke, 2007; Kearns, Kearns & Lawson, 2013). However, the Hitchcock Estate does not conform with external perceptions of violence, crime and poor living conditions, given low crime rates and good housing and environment (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019).

Despite this, as Slater (2017) has noted tends to occur with such marginalised urban places, its residents appear to be tainted with negative assumptions due to where they live. As non-compliant elements are generally considered to be a potential danger to the rest of society (Douglas, 1984: 3), spatial separation minimises the risk of social contamination should non-compliance be permanent. This idea of a continual tension between compliance and non-compliance, with the threat of non-compliance requiring enforcement of compliance, underpins many of the central theories within this thesis. However, considering this tension through metaphorical expression, and the carnivalesque, not only enables a perspective of lived experience, but allows a consideration of how “compliance” is negotiated, rather than it being a simple either/or dualism. The following sections provide an overview of metaphorical expression.

1.9. Social Death as Metaphorical Experience

Metaphors have been subjected to extensive analysis in the communication literature, in which they are seen to be effective ways of enabling others to understand experiences by relating them to more familiar and shared occurrences. While a living individual is unable to fully experience death, most can relate to it as a serious occurrence through experiencing the death of somebody else. Describing unemployment as being like death avoids the use of capitalist terms like “downsizing” which protect the economic order by minimising blame and resistance and encouraging manageability (Arman, 2014). The use of alternative expressions, such as violence (Whiteside, 1991; Gordon, 2008; Gordon, 2011, Pain, 2019) and murder (Chernomas & Hudson, 2009; Grover, 2019; Medvedyuk, Govender & Raphael, 2021) to refer to economic and employment changes reflect the significant impact that they have on individual lives. Embodied research influenced by Merleau-Ponty, such as that by Koch, Fuchs, Summa & Muller (2012), enables the use of metaphors by individuals to describe their own experience as being part of sensemaking process in which bodily feelings are first attempted to be explained to others. Therefore, through metaphors, people can challenge one-dimensional, socially accepted versions of experience, in this case, ones that benefit neo-liberal capitalism, by presenting alternative interpretations.

In Bakhtin's (1981: 61, 272) terms, metaphors are thereby a way that monoglossia, as a discourse which presents itself as the single truth, can be brought into dialogue by heteroglossia, or many different voices and perspectives. This monologic perspective is that long-term unemployed people are idle, lazy and thus to blame for their own situation. Metaphors enable the self to be understood by others without necessarily contravening the limits placed on expression by monologic narrative convention and repression of emotions that may upset the smooth running of the existing order. For example, men are expected to control their feelings, specifically anger (Schwab, Addis, Reigeluth & Berger, 2015), and unemployed people being angry about their situation is not accepted (Peterie, Ramia, Marston & Patulny, 2019). As metaphors both evolve from and evoke lived experience, they can reveal experience which is not recognised within the monologic perspective. Each of the metaphors used by the men in this research expressed their recognition of how the hierarchising processes which place them at the bottom of, or outside, the social order, work to silence their perspective. The following section provides an overview of this before discussing these power relations in the context of dualistic conceptions of structure and agency and social relations, leading into an overview of resistance as conceived in this thesis.

1.10. Expressing Unemployment Through Metaphors

All the metaphors the men in this study draw upon to describe their experiences of being unemployed relate to social hierarchy and being aware of being placed at the bottom of, or outside, that social hierarchy. All of the metaphors also relate to this experience defining them as non-persons, and in most cases, non-humans. This is a deadening experience, which is interpreted broadly through the theory of social death, which is a process that excludes them from wider capitalist society, either permanently or as motivation to conform. That the men themselves have expressed these metaphors aligns with the interpretation of bodily experience being brought to language. Additionally, it emphasises the seriousness of the effect of economic changes upon individual bodies, and that expression of these feelings may be limited by social norms, accepted narratives of unemployment and the restrictions on dialogue enforced via social death. This also indicates that the unemployed men are aware, and feel the impact, of social classification and hierarchisation

processes that are applied to them. In essence, the exclusionary intention of these processes is having the desired effect. However, the expression of the metaphors themselves within the context of such restrictions also indicates that the men recognise the falseness of such an approach. They remain alive and thus retain the ability to be the ones who utter, 'the *final word*' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 54) about themselves, rather than being finalised externally. While this has been traditionally formulated as the structure/agency debate, the following section analyses the attempt to overcome this dualism from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty.

1.11. Structure/Agency Dualism

Notions of hierarchy and individual attempts to negotiate those hierarchies suggest the structure/agency debate which sociology has endeavoured to overcome in theorising the relationship between individual and society (see Boland, 2020). The presence of the structure/agency dualism in unemployment research, even from a critical perspective, leads to the polarisation of how unemployed people are conceived: framed either as passive victims of deterministic structural forces that alter employment opportunities, or as rebels irrationally resisting capitalistic norms of employment. Each of these represents an unrealistic, non-relational view of power which requires the individual either to be completely subjected to power, or to be totally outside of it. While the terms structure and agency appear to be mutually exclusive, whereby one must overcome the other, Merleau-Ponty's notion of prior experience being sedimented into speech, action and things is, 'the necessary ground of freedom' (Spurling, 1977: 120). As such, the presence of one always implies that it is within, or emerges from, the other, and that these converge within the body as it is *both* the target of power (Foucault, 1975/1991: 136) *and* the potential for creativity, and thus resistance. Unlike agency as the ability to be able to act on desires that are truly one's own (Heyes, 2013: 167), Merleau-Ponty's notion of creativity does not represent unconstrained action, but a unique expression of the individual's world. For example, speech is creative but draws upon existing words and their sedimented meaning. Sedimentation thereby allows creativity, as the world does not need to be created anew with each expression. Thus, freedom cannot come from a place of detachment because an individual is never able to fully impose their "own" meaning on the

world, as the world is always already meaningful. Likewise, the individual is not a “blank slate” inscribed by power. Experience is instead a negotiation between the two, and thus power is relational.

1.12. Inside/Outside Dualism

A further way in which research tends to strengthen the oppositional nature of the structure/agency dualism is through the separation of body and world. In dualistic experience, the bodily “inside” is considered separate from a worldly “outside”, and thereby research tends to explore only one of these aspects. Embodied research has sought to overcome this, with Paterson and Hughes (1999: 600) describing this problem in relation to disability studies as holding two separate conceptions of society, one in which an individual is active and compliant, and the other whereby they are non-compliant and thus passive. A similar dualism is reflected in the dominant model of unemployment discourse and intervention which views unemployed benefit recipients as passive and needing to become active (Wright, 2016). Research which follows a counter model understands unemployed people as already active but constrained by circumstances (*ibid*.). This thesis has identified four broad areas in existing research which reflect this polarisation in discourse. At one extreme, the macro-economic perspective on unemployment is uncritical of the concept itself, viewing it as merely a factor in how the economy operates. This tends to homogenise experiences of unemployment, thereby not recognising material differences. At the micro level of this extreme, unemployment is a personal problem with a psychological solution. At the opposing, critical end of this simplified research spectrum, governmentality literature highlights how these economic and psychological assumptions, enforced via jobseeking practices, represent relations of power. However, governmentality tends to focus on discourse rather than lived experience (Boland, 2016: 340). Lived experience is instead considered in greater depth at the micro critical level, which is typically utilised in the sociological literature and examines the impact of discourse and government policy on the everyday lives of unemployed people, although sometimes still framing those affected as passive. As an embodied perspective seeks a holistic view, it is most closely aligned with the sociological literature on unemployment, which has been able to view individual experience within a critical perspective on the wider context.

1.13. Self/Other Dualism

Cartesianism perpetuates the ideal that social relations are simplistic and that situating the self in relation to the social is a matter of rational choice, with the social being a sum of individual transactional or contractual relations. In Cartesian thought the self is separate from the world and others, represented in the Self/Other dualism, such that the Other cannot be known and is merely an object. Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009: 421) refuted this by arguing that the relationship of the self to the social is not, ‘an object of sum of objects’ but is, ‘already there when we come to know or judge it’. Thus, although this relationship can be ignored or consciously rejected, it is not something that can be avoided. Likewise, the self is not closed and private, but open to the world and bursts upon it. This means that the expression of different lived experience, carried in the body as history, always has the potential to creatively emerge. Merleau-Ponty’s notion of difference within the same, inherent in his concept of the flesh of the world, means that this expression is the world speaking through one of its parts, or as Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009: 217) termed it, ‘‘singing’ the world’. Understanding the social as Merleau-Ponty did, as intercorporeal, means that there is a fundamental bodily understanding of others, through gesture, emotion and other expression before the other even speaks. These bodily expressions may then be amplified through language, thus translating invisible bodily experience into visible language (Merleau-Ponty, 1964b: 19).

However, this expression may not be recognised, as people may refuse the potential reciprocity inherent in Merleau-Ponty’s notion of reversibility, and thereby deny the validity of the other’s perspective. Thus, existing conceptions of how these expressions emerge tend to allude to them arising from a position which is outside or below accepted social structures. For example, the Marxist notion of, ‘history from below’, Bakhtin’s (1984b: 272) concept of, ‘the other side’ and, aligning with the death metaphor, alternative histories as ‘haunting’ (Gordon, 2011; Bright, 2016) the present. Each of these concepts suggests something which tends to be invisible or hidden yet is nevertheless is always present and periodically makes itself known. However, because these emergences are typically small-scale and do not lead to long-term change, they are not normally considered as forms of resistance, as they are seen as largely

ineffective in challenging the prevailing neo-liberal capitalist order. The following overview of the final section of this thesis presents an alternative embodied perspective.

1.14. The Resistive Body

Conceiving of resistance as class-based, large-scale and collective benefits neo-liberal capitalism as it is a form of resistance that is extremely visible and can thus be visibly, sometimes violently, repressed. Such forms of resistance are clearly antithetical to neo-liberal capitalist values of individual self-reliance, and from this perspective are straightforward to refute as dangerous minorities that do not reflect the views of wider society by invoking concepts such as social death which aim to exclude and ensure compliance. Small-scale resistance poses no such threat and as such may be either accepted as a, 'safety valve' (Grindon, 2004: 153) which allows those disgruntled with neo-liberal capitalism to "let off steam" and thus prevent large-scale resistance, or otherwise be considered too meagre to be defined as resistance at all because of a lack of wider political impact. However, rather than blunting its potential, these views enable the aim of small-scale resistance to be achieved. This aim is to create temporary relief from imposed conditions without upsetting the current order, which could subsequently worsen their current position. These notions are reflected in Scott's (1985) theory of everyday resistance which frames small, covert acts such as, 'false compliance…feigned ignorance, slander…sabotage' as resistance (*ibid.*:29). Scott (1985: 29-31) argued that such acts are overlooked because individually they have little impact, yet together may undermine official systems, or at least prevent their optimal and smooth running. This supports a relational view of power, whereby resistance is situated within the very structures that attempt to control and order, and that compliance and resistance may be present within the same action.

The concept of embodied resistance is well established in feminist research, particularly drawing upon the work of Judith Butler, which identified that the role played by the body in resistance may be non-verbal and thus transfer amongst individuals via affect, which motivates emotional responses (Lilja, 2017). Affect is described as something which triggers a reaction in others (Berberich, Campbell & Hudson, 2013: 314) and originates from the theories of Merleau-

Ponty. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's notion of the body as inherently resistive and creative aligns with such interpretations. Building on the concept of affect and relating it to Merleau-Ponty's theory of inherent reversibility, this thesis explores how the unemployed men use carnivalesque laughter and the grotesque to switch their assigned place at the bottom of the hierarchy and gain a response which is lacking from employers in their job seeking efforts.

1.14.1. Carnivalesque Resistance

Laughter is often seen as an ineffective form of resistance because it does not demonstrably induce change. However, as Bakhtin (1984b: 11) noted, this conclusion is reached because laughter is viewed as individual and isolated reactions, which do not have the same power as collective carnivalesque laughter. As laughter tends to not be taken seriously it is less scrutinised than other more overt forms of resistance (*ibid*.: 4), and therefore, as with other forms of small and everyday forms of resistance, it fulfils laughter's aim to challenge the existing order through ridicule. As carnivalesque laughter and the grotesque are part of the hidden other side, they are also expressions of interpretations and ways of living that are not acceptable to wider society. It thus enables official and monologic ideals to be brought down to the material level of the people, where they are degraded, explored on their own terms, and pulled apart. This can be seen as a forced dialogue with that which presents itself as an incontestable singular truth and is thus an example of heteroglossia. Bakhtin (1984b: 256) noted how death is not the end because it gives birth to laughter, and that this laughter is able to defeat fear. Thus, laughter is a way to overcome social death, because social death needs to be taken seriously to be effective in motivating conformance.

1.15. Research Gaps and Contribution

There are two main contributions made by this thesis. The first is to build upon existing metaphors both expressed by, and applied to the experiences of, unemployed people and the theorising of this within the framework of social death by adapting the Kralova (2018) model. Second, the research responds to recent calls to expand investigation into jobseeker resistance, which has received less attention than governmentality perspectives (Peterie et al., 2019), leading to unemployed people being conceived as lacking agency (Egdell &

Beck, 2020). Although this gap in jobseeker resistance has begun to be addressed through research into lived experiences of unemployment (e.g. Whelan, 2020; Redman, 2021; Redman & Fletcher, 2021), this thesis also adopts some theories and methods which have received minor attention within unemployment research, thus supporting these broader contributions.

Bakhtin's carnivalesque is a lesser utilised framework to theorise resistance, perhaps because it emphasises the collective nature of such resistance, which is seen to be lacking in the neo-liberal ideal of individualism and the corresponding perceived decline in collective forms of identification. One reason why the carnivalesque has lacked attention in unemployment research may be because individual interviews are a more common method of investigating unemployment, which makes it unlikely that carnivalesque resistance will emerge as it did in the group observations undertaken in this inquiry. Other related research of dirty work demonstrates that even when ethnography is undertaken and aspects of carnivalesque laughter, parody, grotesque humour and playful violence have been observed, they have not always been interpreted via Bakhtin's theory (for example, see Ackroyd & Crowdy, 1990). Such behaviour is not generally considered effective enough to warrant the label of resistance, particularly when viewed using non-relational or dualistic concepts of power. The application of Bakhtin's carnivalesque is perhaps best established in the education literature, which has also more recently taken an embodied "turn". The following sections outline the contributions made by this thesis in more detail, before considering some broader gaps within the literature which this research could potentially contribute towards.

1.15.1. Metaphors

Each of the four metaphors outlined in this thesis have been explored extensively in the wider literature. However, metaphors applied to populations have more typically been considered, rather than metaphors as expressions of individual bodily experience, and therefore the embodied perspective taken has the potential to provide additional insights. Metaphors have also not been fully explored in relation to experiences of unemployment. The two main exceptions to this are Ainsworth and Hardy's (2009) findings that older unemployed people

described job loss as death and murder, and the application of the metaphor of purgatory to welfare practices (Boland & Griffin, 2018; Griffin, Boland, Tuite & Hennessey, 2020). Ainsworth and Hardy (2009) connect the use of this metaphor to the subordination of body to mind which they explore in relation to discourses of the psychologisation and individualisation of experience as well as age discriminatory assumptions about the potential of older workers which means their unemployment is likely to be permanent. While research which draws upon Ainsworth and Hardy's (2009) work largely follows their discursive approach, there are several studies which consider additional aspects related to this thesis, namely, organisational death (Bell & Taylor, 2011), trauma and wounding (Gabriel, Gray & Goregaoker, 2013), vampires, sacrifice and (un)dying (Riach & Kelly, 2015), embodied ageing (Cutcher & Riach, 2017), unemployment as liminality (Daskalaki & Simosi, 2018) and unemployed people as 'Other' (Skovgaard-Smith, Soekijad & Down, 2020). This thesis thereby has the potential to supplement this literature, particularly by exploring the metaphors as they relate to long-term unemployment, rather than the initial job loss, and by adopting a less typical embodied perspective.

1.15.2. Social Death

There are two main arguments put forward in this thesis for adapting Kralova's model. First, it is proposed that loss of personhood is distinct from loss of identity or role, although identity and personhood tend to be conflated in neo-liberal capitalism, such that when an employed identity is lost so is personhood. Loss of personhood means unemployed people are not recognised as worthy of an ethical relation through reciprocity as they are considered to be a non-person. This means personhood plays a much more prominent role than reflected in the Kralova model. Some earlier models of social death, such as Sweeting and Gilhooly (1991) did place personhood more centrally but did not theorise this within a more comprehensive framework as Kralova does.

Second, the pivotal importance of employment to identity in neo-liberal capitalism means that employment is not just a role, as outlined in the Kralova model. The use of metaphors alluding to social death by people experiencing unemployment also proposes that first-hand accounts should be a factor in determining whether social death has occurred, rather than the application of

set criteria, as suggested by Kralova. This provides the flexibility to recognise social death as an externally applied social ordering and disciplinary tool that is felt within bodies attempting to negotiate its affects.

1.15.3. Resistance

Peterie et al. (2019) recently noted the need for more research into jobseeker resistance, particularly those behaviours which contradict the requirements for them to feel shame, blame themselves, and suppress forbidden emotions like anger. This thesis builds upon their use of Scott's (1985) theory of everyday resistance as an alternative perspective to support understanding of jobseeker resistance by proposing Bakhtin's carnivalesque as another way in which small, temporary resistances of the current order emerge. Bakhtin's (1984b) carnivalesque is an archetype of subversive resistance, given not only its content but that his analysis in itself was a disguised critique of Soviet Russia.

However, Bakhtin's (*ibid*., 18-19) own declaration that Rabelaisian carnivalesque is lacking in individualistic modern cultures, with modern individualistic laughter and satire not possessing the power of collective carnival laughter, has perhaps led to its lesser adoption as a theoretical framework to analyse small-scale resistance. Although it is not a gap specifically addressed by this research it is interesting to note that Bakhtin's discursive theory has received minimal attention with regards to governmentality and the welfare state. Instead, Bakhtin's theories are most typically employed in analysing literature, film and culture. Analyses of more overtly resistive responses utilising Bakhtin's carnivalesque and grotesque tend to have been applied to large scale protests and movements (e.g. Hammond, 2020; Tunali, 2020) and music and festivals as counter-culture (e.g. Henderson, 2019; Anderton, 2020). However, there are a number of parallels between this inquiry and the application of Bakhtin's carnivalesque within educational contexts, which have realised alternative interpretations of deviant behaviours as small group creative resistance against the homogenisation inherent in learning contexts (e.g. Tam, 2010; Psycher & Lozenski, 2014). This thesis thereby represents a relatively distinct application of Bakhtin's theory within unemployment research, particularly as combined with the analysis of metaphorical expression.

1.15.4. Broader Gaps

When situated within the broader literature of work and employment, this research aligns with recent calls for a return to embodiment, and the related suggestion that the theories of Merleau-Ponty have not been fully explored in this respect (Kupers, 2020). While embodied research in work and employment is well established, it has been noted that assumptions about the disappearance and irrelevance of manual work have left a gap in research regarding the experiences of lower skilled men (Slutskaya et al., 2016). While this gap has begun to be addressed with regards to men currently undertaking 'dirty work', the recognised lack of availability of such roles means this gap could extend to unemployed lower skilled men who have previously undertaken such work but have not been able to find re-employment. Gist-Mackay's (2018) findings that those seeking "blue-collar" roles are disembodied by jobseeker practices that force them to comply with "white-collar" textual job applications processes supports this. Dougherty, Schraedley, Gist-Mackay and Wickert (2018) further argued that the need for embodied studies which explore the intersection between discourse and materiality is supported by the dominance of discursive analyses and social constructionist perspectives which largely ignore material poverty as a significant factor affecting job seeking and re-employment. Thereby, the focus of this research on the experiences of long-term unemployed men considered to be lower skilled aligns with these concerns.

1.16. Central Theorists

There are three central theorists whose work underpins the approach and interpretation within this thesis, these being Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault and Mikhail Bakhtin. The whole thesis is supported by Merleau-Ponty's ontology and epistemology, articulated in his later works as the flesh of the world which indicated the inseparability of body and world (see section 3.2.). Each of the theorists also aligns most closely with one of the research questions, albeit there is some overlap. While theories and theorists have been drawn upon to the extent they are compatible, it is noted that the full works of each theorist do not necessarily fit together as a coherent whole. In instances of gaps or potential conflict, Merleau-Ponty's thesis was given precedence as the overarching ontology, epistemology and perspective. Merleau-Ponty's

unexpected early death left his final work incomplete. Although the ideas articulated in his unfinished manuscript, *The Visible and the Invisible* are largely reflected in his earlier works, particularly *Signs*, prominent Merleau-Ponty scholars have subsequently built upon his work, especially Laurie Spurling (1977), M.C. Dillon (1997), Douglas Low (2000) and David Morris (2018). While it was preferable to draw directly from Merleau-Ponty where possible, these theorists are also important sources in their own right which support and add to the original body of work.

In respect of the first question, *how do older long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?,* Foucault's (2010: 31) method of a, 'history of the present' was applied to determine how the current monologic perspective on unemployment developed. Given the fundamental role played by neo-liberal politics and its focus on supporting capitalist economics, which requires a particular perspective on unemployment, Foucault's (*ibid*.) analysis of the development of neo-liberalism is particularly relevant. The concepts of hierarchisation, disciplinary power (Foucault, 1975/1991) and governmentality (Foucault, 2010) support the understanding of how practices which construct the unemployed as a group at the bottom of, or outside, the social order are reflected in welfare reform discourse and social relations. Bakhtin's (1981: 61) notion of monoglossia was selected to describe this embedded political, economic and psychological perspective on unemployment because it presents itself as a single truth and suppresses alternative perspectives. While the critique of capitalism draws upon Karl Marx as the foremost analyst who initially traced it historical development, it seeks not to be constrained by a Marxist dialectic. Despite Spurling (1977: 11) describing Merleau-Ponty's notion of behaviour as a, 'dialogue or dialectic' with the environment, as Merleau-Ponty moved beyond Marxism he would perhaps be more inclined to agree with Bakhtin, who described a dialectic as the process of turning a living dialogue into the abstract by removing the voices (Bakhtin quoted in the introduction to *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 1984a: xxxi). A dialogical approach thereby aligns with the key theorists by enabling a consideration of how people negotiate attempts to impose structures and identities upon them, as a power relation, rather than being located inside or outside of power.

Although Foucault (1975/1991: 136) focusses on the body as a target of power, his theories have been accused of being, 'overly discursive' (Holmes, 2015: 178) and thus ignoring emotions and relations between bodies. Foucault's notion of governmentality as the 'conduct of conduct' (Dean, 1995: 561) is a well-established mode of analysis of jobseeking practices, yet governmentality also tends to focus on discourse rather than lived experience (Boland, 2016: 340). The second question in this study, *what is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?* turns to the lived experience of these practices of governmentality. The interpretation of the informant's use of metaphors is based on Merleau-Ponty's notion of the link between primary perception and expression. When effective, these expressions take us to the object or experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1973: 3).

The third question, *how do older long-term unemployed men live through this experience?* draws most extensively on Bakhtin's (1984b) theories of carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour, such that laughter is able to defeat the metaphorical death imposed by institutional and social practices. Bakhtin's (1984b: 18-19) notion of the material bodily principle inherent in the carnivalesque, and the body's blending with the world and others (*ibid*.: 26-27) could be seen to align with Merleau-Ponty's concept of the flesh of the world. Additionally, reversibility, as defined by Merleau-Ponty, is foundational to the potential to be able to see from another's perspective, and thereby the choice to understand their experience and provide an ethical response. One of the reversible aspects is that in order to see, one must be seen, and thus Foucault's (1975/1991: 201-202) notion of the severing of the see/being seen dyad provides an understanding of how this can be prevented through power relations. Finally, Bakhtin's ethical response was dependent on not finalising others and allowing them to define themselves. Each of these aspects thereby supports the understanding of the carnivalesque as an assertion of reciprocity and dialogue in response to deadening effects of how the long-term unemployed are framed by neo-liberal capitalism.

1.17. Chapter Overviews

The following sections provide an overview of each of the following four chapters: Literature Review, Methodology, Stories and Conclusion.

1.17.1. Literature Review Chapter

The Literature Review is split into four main sections, the first of which provides an overview. The remaining three each deal with the relevant literature in relation to each of the three research questions. The first section considers how the singular perspective on unemployment developed under neo-liberal capitalism in order to support the organisation and continuation of the current economic order. While this benefits from presenting the economy and society as separate spheres of experience, they are closely interwoven, reflected in an analysis of how employment underpins social value and is the foundational basis for many forms of social hierarchisation. As this frames unemployed people as not fitting established social categories, they are stigmatised as outsiders through such concepts as the “underclass”. This particularly applies to those who are disadvantaged in their ability to meet these social requirements due to lacking resources, such as when living in poverty, and thus already experiencing marginalisation.

The second section, aligning with the first research question, outlines practices of governmentality and how attempts to shape the conduct of unemployed people frame them as deviant. This includes the establishment of one-sided relations which subject unemployed people to surveillance, control how they spend their time, require them to undertake self-governance and enforce this via contractual relations. It is discussed how the embedding of such punitive practices contributes to social perceptions that such treatment is necessary due to the framing of long-term unemployed men in particular as possessing negative character traits and therefore are to blame for their situation.

In the third section of the Literature Review, which relates to the second research question, views the experience of long-term unemployment from the perspective of the affect upon individual bodies. This provides the theoretical basis for the interpretation of each of the four metaphors expressed by the men in this research: animals, meat, corpses and scum. Each of the metaphors,

although corpses in particular, are related to social death as an exclusionary process that severs non-compliant individuals from social relations.

The final section, relating to the third research question, outlines Bakhtin's notion of carnivalesque humour and grotesque laughter as a form of everyday resistance that is able to express alternative experiences that are normally silenced through the deadening processes expressed through the metaphors. It is outlined how, although laughter is typically interpreted as an ineffective form of resistance because it does not create permanent change, this suits the needs of subordinate people who do not wish to further contribute to their oppression. This is related to affect theory as a way in which, in the face of structuring processes that define them as metaphorically dead, the long-term unemployed can receive confirmation that they remain alive.

1.17.2. Methodology Chapter

The Methodology Chapter begins with an overview of the core aspects of Merleau-Ponty's ontology and epistemology as they relate to the perspective underpinning this thesis. Of particular relevance are the notions of the flesh of the world, its reversible quality and what this means for interpretations of the self in relation to others. This leads into a discussion of the phenomenological research ethos which provides more detail regarding the research questions as related to the phenomenological aim to reach "the things themselves" and the notion of phenomenological truth as based within lived experience.

Overall an ethnographic research approach was followed, which aligns with other embodied research that seeks to understand lived experience. Detail is provided regarding access to the field, and how the experiential material (field notes and photographs) were produced via observation and participatory visual research. These approaches are underpinned by Merleau-Ponty's theory of creative expression and a phenomenological interpretation of photography. While it is emphasised that ethnography focuses on writing and interpretation, details are provided of how the experiential material was reflected upon using phenomenological themes and dialogical narrative analysis in order to select those stories which best represented the lived experience of being an older long-term unemployed man. The ethical considerations of this approach are

weaved throughout the chapter as well as an explicit consideration of researcher positionality and research motivation. The discussion is critical of the notion of “giving voice” to marginalised people, and instead understands them as speaking all the time but not necessarily being listened to. Thus, the negotiation of power relations to build trust and rapport was a continual process, requiring the researcher to balance the ethical appeal of stories wanting to be heard and the need to protect informant identity.

1.17.3. Stories and Discussion Chapter

The Stories Chapter presents the selected stories told by the informants as vignettes which aim to preserve the dialogue and context of the telling of each story. The chapter begins with a short overview about each of the informants in order to contextualise, rather than finalise, their individual situations. The remainder of the chapter is structured by the three research questions. The first question regarding interaction with welfare state institutions, specifically Jobcentre Plus, outlines discussions of the men’s experiences of being subject to surveillance, both inside and outside institutional walls, the latter of which is intertwined with the prevalence of digital systems that do not provide the opportunity for face-to-face reciprocal relations preferred by the men. The men are moulded to think that not submitting to these practices means they have something to hide. Interactions at Work Club position the men as needing to have “realistic goals” which do not include “dream jobs”, but instead looking for “any job”. However, the men create a rough hierarchy of the roles they find via their job search, using carnivalesque and grotesque humour to avoid applying for some low-level jobs and to “try on” other higher-level roles that would normally be considered out of their reach. When the men receive a rare response to one of their job applications they use it to affirm their subjectivity which, within the context of the unacknowledged unlikelihood of them becoming re-employed, is considered by them to be better than getting a job.

The vignettes presented in relation to second question each outline an expression or story told that relates to each of the four broad metaphors for what it is like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man, these being to be viewed, or treated, as an animal, meat, corpse and dirt. The majority of the stories relate to the animal and death metaphors, with meat and

dirt being singular expressions. The animal stories of a pet parrot, spider, snake and pigeons represent a range of control over wild nature, each of which is related to practices of commodification and making docile. Similarly, stories of funerals and a parody of the Case Workers as body snatchers, allude to the tensions between externally imposed control and the wish to be recognised for a contribution to society that does not focus on employment.

The final section details stories about “fun” that allude to the carnivalesque as a strategy for living through deadening social and governmentality practices. This is rooted in past carnivalesque relations which characterised how men coped with working in local industries. Although these industries have now been “taken away”, this approach remains as an embodied survival strategy. Some of the photographs from the participatory visual research are also included within this section to emphasise how the men’s world goes beyond that which can be seen. Examples of carnivalesque reversals and parodies are provided which enable the men to temporarily switch the hierarchy and exchange places with their Case Workers. This supports the men to shift the blame for their unemployment onto their Case Workers, with the chapter ending with a story about how the Case Workers are able to see from the men’s perspective and thus understand that the men’s re-employment is not as simple as them “not wanting it” enough.

1.17.4. Conclusion Chapter

The Conclusion Chapter draws together the threads presented throughout the previous Stories Chapter within the context of the most relevant literature. Structured by the three research questions, it is concluded that the men’s interactions with Jobcentre Plus are deadening predominantly because of the character homogenisation inherent in its practices, although there are nuances within Work Club which allow more reciprocal relations. This supports the notion that the men have experienced social death, as reflected in their metaphorical expressions. This strengthens the need to consider individual perspectives when determining if social death has occurred, rather than applying set criteria.

This research reveals how the men negotiate practices identified in the existing governmentality literature, particularly Foucault's (1975/1991: 201-207) panoptical surveillance in Jobcentres and via digital systems (Fletcher & Wright, 2018), and Goffman's (1957: 49-50) mortification. When these practices are viewed within the context of the men's specific circumstances, they become contradictory and open to ridicule. This is reflected in several reversals initiated by the men through carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour. In particular, the notion that unemployed people are wasting time and seen as 'doing nothing' (Boland, 2015: 5;) becomes the recognition that job seeking is a waste of time as the men are unlikely to become re-employed. This is the unacknowledged side of being "realistic". However, both men and Case Workers must still comply with the requirement to look for work, meaning that the boundary between compliance and non-compliance is blurred. Carnivalesque "fun" is interpreted as a habitual embodied strategy that enables difficult situations to be survived. It defeats the idealism of the mind inherent in neo-liberal capitalism by imposing the material bodily principle. It denies the affect of deadening practices and confirms the men as worthy of a response through forcing creative dialogue and reciprocal recognition. It allows the men to accept the low and stigmatised position they are given in the social order by implying a crude bodily sameness in existence that tears down hierarchical relations and thus frames it as being more fun at the bottom. As a form of everyday resistance according to Scott's (1985) theory, the carnivalesque is interpreted not as resisting re-employment, but as a resistance of the finalisation of character and complete control deemed necessary to return to employment. The chapter emphasises an understanding of long-term unemployment which is complex, nuanced and ambiguous, and thereby it is proposed that metaphors and the carnivalesque provide a fruitful potential for interpreting experiences of long-term unemployment.

1.18. Conclusion

This chapter has situated this thesis within the broad literature, identified the gaps in research and outlined the contributions to knowledge. Specifically, this thesis builds on existing uses of death metaphors in unemployment research, expands upon the understanding of unemployment in relation to social death and addresses a gap in the literature regarding jobseeker resistance.

Additionally, this chapter has provided an overview of the research process and outcomes. The three guiding research questions, underpinned by the embodied perspective adopted, supported the researcher in seeing from the perspective of lived experiences of unemployment. In line with this, metaphors are interpreted as expressions of bodily experience brought to language and speak of the men's placement at the bottom of, or outside the social order. This is explained through the concept of social death as an imposed status that requires the excluded to be brought under control before they are provided with a place in the social order. The absence of dialogue which characterises social death means that individual experience cannot be affirmed through reciprocal relations. This emphasises the importance of listening to alternative stories of unemployment, which is enabled in this thesis through the adoption of an attitude of wonder and ethnographic tools. These methods support the retelling of the men's stories which evoke the deadening experience of being a jobseeker and also how this is survived through carnivalesque reversals that resist control and negative finalisation of character. The three central theorists outlined in this chapter, and in particular Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin, provide the threads that lead through this thesis from literature, ontology, epistemology and methods into the interpretation of the materials gathered.

Building upon the central theorists and theories, the following Literature Review Chapter provides a detailed analysis of the development of long-term unemployment as a problematised status within neo-liberal capitalism, outlining all relevant terms that form the basis of the critique of unemployment monoglossia from the perspective of lived experience. Regarding the first research question, welfare state institutional practices are outlined within the context of Foucault's theories. The second question is supported by literature that provides an understanding of the bodily impact of unemployment and how this is expressed through metaphors, drawing on Merleau-Ponty's notion of expression. Literature in relation to the third question focusses on a relational concept of power in which lived experience is the source of resistance against the monologic perspective on unemployment. Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque supports an interpretation of laughter and grotesque humour as a form of everyday resistance and a strategy for surviving the social death imposed upon the long-term unemployed men.

2.0. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Although the body and embodied, lived, experiences are the focus of this inquiry, it is first necessary to understand the world in which those bodies are situated. This context, outlined in section 2.2., focusses upon the body as a target of power (Foucault, 1975/1991: 136) and drawing on Foucault's critique of neo-liberalism, examines how the welfare state has evolved from a mechanism designed to protect society from the inequality generated by capitalism, to one that supports the capitalist market. Capitalist social relations require the mind to control the body, represented through a particular relation to the self. This requirement is reflected in the notion of self-governance, which is one of the dual aspects of Foucault's (2010: 92) theory of governmentality. When self-governance appears to be absent, the other aspect, governance and regulation, is deemed necessary.

Direct regulation and governance of unemployed people is undertaken via welfare state institutions, particularly Jobcentre Plus. However, regulation is also reflected in social practices which enable those identities which benefit neo-liberal capitalism to be valued, and those which do not to be disallowed. Two social processes are explored with regards to this: the use of social norms to value certain identities, and the social compulsion to order or hierarchise society. These are not mutually exclusive and are conceived as intertwined. This discussion does not seek to support a particular form of social structure, but to understand how they are applied and negotiated. This draws in particular on Douglas' (1984: 3) notion that people who are viewed as not fitting the social order are seen as a danger to that order. Thus, individuals and groups are excluded with the aim of forcing compliance or otherwise eliminating them permanently. Evidently these processes are not politically neutral, and unequal access to material resources means some lives appear incompatible with the idea of the rational self. This unequal position, particularly with regards to finding re-employment, can be considered relatively disadvantaged. When these conditions persist over time they can lead to individuals or populations being marginalised, or that being at the bottom of outside of the social order becomes a more permanent form of existence.

Underpinning the embedding of a particular perspective regarding long-term unemployed people within institutions and social practices is speech as a bodily expression. The linguistic notions of monoglossia and heteroglossia as opposing forces that pull towards and away from a singular perspective, are drawn upon to explain how the notion that long-term unemployed people are deviant, lazy and to blame for their situation can be presented as, '*the* single truth' (Lachmann, Eshelman & Davis, 1988: 116, italics in original), yet also resisted. The development of this dominant monologic discourse is explored in a largely Foucauldian manner as a, 'history of the present' (Foucault, 1975/1991: 31), also known as an ontology of the present (Taylor, D. 2013a: 2). This has a critical and emancipatory aim, enabling it to be imagined how things could be different. This analysis also draws upon Marx, who is widely accepted as the foremost critic of capitalism (Meiksins Wood, 1996: 2), and still retains relevance, especially in times of economic crisis (Fuchs, 2017). However, it is necessary to depart from this in order to recognise freedom's potential, not in a dialectical synthesis or revolution, but in dialogue and the everyday that forms the opposing, yet subordinate heteroglossia.

Section 2.4. considers how the monologic perspective on the long-term unemployed, as it is felt by individual bodies is experienced as "deadening". This is because the imposition of this perspective objectifies unemployed people, negatively finalises their character and silences the ability of those affected to dialogue with this. This is presented as a form of social death, drawing upon Kralova's (2018) model as a comprehensive and recent analysis of the concept. Kralova's typology relates social death to many other processes of social ordering which silence excluded elements, such as ostracism. This potentially broadens its application and makes it particularly relevant to this study given its allusion to metaphorical death. The theoretical background to each metaphor expressed by the men in this research supports this interpretation.

The focus on governmentality in unemployment research, means resistance against these "deadening" practices has, to a certain extent, been neglected (Boland, 2016; Peterie et al. 2019). The final section (2.5.) examines Bakhtin's (1984b) theory of carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour as a form of

resistance. Specifically, it is a form of resistance which is able to metaphorically and temporarily tear down the social order without risking the potentially serious consequences of more overt forms of resistance. The official perspective of the monoglossia of unemployment is metaphorically thrown to the ground, dispelling the fear intentionally produced by its "deadening" discourse and foregrounding a creative, material bodily perspective. It is argued that, via this movement, alternative selves can be affirmed in a way they aren't by neo-liberal capitalism.

In summary, the structure of this literature review follows the centrifugal movement of heteroglossia as it pulls away from the monologic perspective. Thus, it begins by considering first how the singular perspective has developed over time, and is enforced, and ends in considering how the voices it aims to silence surreptitiously pull it apart.

2.2. The Monologic Perspective on Unemployment

In the UK, where this study took place, there is a dominant ideology, or generally accepted set of beliefs, about unemployment. As speech, and text, are the essential means by which this ideology has come to be generally understood, adopted and reproduced (van Dijk, 2013: 175), it can also be said that there is a dominant discourse of unemployment. The nature of this discourse is reflected in Bakhtin's (1981: 61) notion of monoglossia, which is strengthened over time through a centripetal linguistic force which imposes unity on perspectives (*ibid.*: 272). For example, historically, Labour voters were found to be more sympathetic towards unemployed people than Conservative voters (Furnham, 1983), yet these opposing perspectives appear to have been eradicated with the political shift to the right and associated 'punitive turn' (Fletcher & Wright, 2018) of welfare reform entrenching a disciplinary approach to governing unemployment. This monoglossia is that unemployed people, particularly those who are long-term unemployed and dependent upon claiming welfare support payments, are to blame for their situation, are not fulfilling their responsibility to society, and therefore are seen as an "underclass" outside mainstream society.

Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2009: 149) concept of sedimentation, as defined in section 1.11, enables an understanding of how, over time, this perspective is acquired and drawn upon by individuals, as well as being embedded in institutions and specifically with regards to unemployment, the institutional framework of the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus. This is in line with the, 'progression from perception to expression to history' (Adams, 2001: 204) which is central to Merleau-Ponty's thesis (see section 3.2.). Speech draws upon sedimented language and meanings, a sediment which forms when expression, which is limited to the monologic perspective, 'folds back' (Low, 2000: 21) upon and strengthens the original meaning. This is the, 'centripetal condition' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: 65) that forms the single truth, with Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 96) noting that, '[t]ruth is another name for sedimentation'. The monologic perspective on unemployment has been strengthened over time by neo-liberalism's economically orientated politics which deny the state a role in preventing the adverse social impacts of profit generation. This particular combination of political and economic objectives, focussing on the generation of profit via markets, is known as capitalism. Foucault (1975/1991: 30-31) demonstrated that, in order to understand the impact of such power relations on the individual body, it is necessary to undertake, 'a history of the present.' This involves tracing the roots of, 'capitalistic practices, values and categories' (Meiksins Wood, 1996: 13) to reveal it as requiring a particular form of social relations to ensure the maximisation of profit (*ibid*.).

2.2.1. The History of the Present

According to neo-liberal economics, unemployment should not occur, and if it does it occur, it is individuals rather than corporations who are to blame (Mirowski, 2009: 438). According to economic theory of supply and demand, the supply of unemployed workers will develop themselves to meet new employer demands and thereby become re-employed, enabling the market to right itself without the need for state intervention (Mann, 2015). Full employment is therefore seen as not only possible, but the natural tendency of the market, if complete flexibility is allowed, particularly with regard to price, or concerning employment, wages. This leads to the conclusion that the only cause for unemployment is voluntary, due to workers withholding their labour

because they are unwilling to accept lower wages. In other words, perceived economic imperfections are explained from the neo-liberal perspective as being due to individual choices conceived as irrational because they do not align with economic theory.

The prevention of state interference in markets is a central ideology of the neo-liberal political agenda, as defined in the late 1930s (Plehwe, 2015: 14). The neo-liberal state aims to, 'govern for the market' (Foucault, 2010: 121), representing a reversal of the previous liberal aim of the state taking action to correct the negative impact of the market on society (*ibid*.). In the latter case it was recognised that poverty was not just a side-effect of capitalism but was engineered in order to make profit. The economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, known as Keynesianism, are seen as a more balanced and less radical form of capitalism which could address poverty (Mann, 2015; Mann, 2016a). Keynesianism recognises the necessity of state intervention, such as maintaining public ownership of industries which were not necessarily profit making but provided useful services as well as large-scale employment. Keynesian economic theories were formally discarded by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, elected in 1979, in favour of mainstreaming neo-liberal economics (Tribe, 2009: 69). This was because, it was argued, public industries needed to be subjected to market forces. However, those that failed under these conditions, such as shipbuilding in the North East UK, collapsed without government support and intervention (Tomaney, Pike & Cornford, 1999). The neo-liberal approach is periodically questioned in times of economic crisis, leading to calls of a return to Keynesianism, such as in the 2007-2008 economic recession. However, in the latter case, neo-liberalism was quickly restored by stigmatising and blaming those claiming welfare support, including unemployed people (Scambler, 2018). Thus, the significant social impacts of industrial failure and job loss were seen to necessitate the scaling back of state intervention via austerity rather than an increase in state intervention to prevent or mitigate these effects.

While dependency, and particularly dependency on state support through welfare benefits, has long been considered morally reprehensible, forms of acceptable dependency have further narrowed under neo-liberalism. UK

welfare state ideology has gradually shifted from one of guaranteeing stability and security through relief payments previously known as the 'dole' (Robinson 1936: 226) to the expectation of self-support and conditional entitlements. For example, those previously exempt, such as single mothers and people with disabilities, are now expected to support themselves through waged work (Wiggan, 2015). The subordination of the state to the market under neo-liberalism has seen the extension of market relations to encompass that which were previously social concerns. Thus, social relations are conceptualised, not as a collective, but as transactions between individuals governed by contracts (Foucault, 2010: 245). Individuals can thereby depend, not upon the state, nor on each other. They cannot even depend upon the market, which would imply a form of responsibility on the part of the market. Instead, capitalism under neo-liberalism requires individuals to depend only upon themselves. This requires a particular relation to self, referred to as the rational self.

2.2.2. The Rational Self

The rational self is a notion of the self as, 'separate from the world, others, and even embodied emotions, [which] can nonetheless rationally manipulate and control the world, others, and itself.' (Low, 2010: 199). This assumption of control means that every action or behaviour can be conceived as an unconstrained choice, with the rational self being expected to always act in its own self-interest. Thereby, for an individual to enter into any relation which does not benefit them can be conceived as an irrational choice. Self-interest typically has an economic component and thus supports the market as the route to self-realisation and individual freedom. However, this contrasts with previous social conceptions of employment. According to Marx's (1887: 379) concept of labour-power, waged employment is seen as a fundamentally unequal relationship and thereby inherently exploitative, but something that workers needed to engage in to survive. Marx recognised that employers were dependent upon workers' labour-power, it being considered the most important commodity for capital as it is the only one which itself produces value (Giddens, 1995: 120), meaning that workers could resist exploitation by participating in the collective struggle for improved working conditions. From this perspective, exploitative employers and corporations are viewed as to blame for workers' hardships, and there is not only solidarity with collective worker concerns, but a

recognition that workers require a social safety net to protect them from the actions of unscrupulous employers. This extended to support for unemployed people, particularly in areas of high unemployment, enabling them to organise locally and protest for their rights. These rights centred on the primacy of material need, which meant the right to appropriately compensated work, or otherwise full maintenance (Bagguley, 1992). This notion of rights is reflected in trade union unemployment insurance schemes, a forerunner of welfare benefit payments, which prevented employers from devaluing trade wage-rates by supporting unemployed workers while they waited for an appropriate job offer (Walters, 2000: 64). As capitalism suffers from such collective action, it benefits from a sense of self which is conversely viewed as being separate from others. The rational self is thereby the norm of relating to the self under neo-liberal capitalism.

Although the rational self and its associated social relations are presented under neo-liberalism as, 'the natural state of humankind' (Mirowski, 2009: 435), it is a form of order imposed upon nature. This is achieved by comparing individuals to the behavioural norms associated with the rational self and using this to, 'hierarchize [sic] individuals in relation to one another' (Foucault, 1975/1991: 148, 223). Through relations of differentiation, individuals are seen to engage in 'othering' (Bradley, 2014) and boundary construction (Anthias, 2013) both of which aim to describe how people order social space, grouping themselves together with people they perceive to be like them, and separating those who are perceived to be different. Although this dualism of self and other is presented as an objective and primary reality, the primary reality is the lived experience upon which consciousness reflects in constructing the self (see section 3.2.3.). This relation to self is thus detrimental to those who are materially disadvantaged because resources are required to support the narratives of progress expected of capitalistic rational selves. In order to focus on this as a psychological concern, the body needs to fade into the background (Leder, 1990a: 26; Konopatsch & Payne, 2012: 341), which it cannot do if the body is in pain through sickness, injury or disability. Therefore, when bodily needs are present, they are difficult to ignore, yet a system which does not recognise material need posits them as a choice. For example, Wright and Patrick (2009) found that jobseekers faced going hungry in order to attend an

interview. Similarly, while capital is able to move freely from place to place in search of higher profits (Smith, 2010: 6, 152), individuals require material and psychological resources to be able to follow capital for employment (Foucault, 2010: 230). Although this individual inability to comply with capitalist demands is framed as irrational because it resists capitalist progress (Bauman, 2004: 6), such inequality is also considered to be one of the strongest drivers for capitalist progress (Mirowski, 2009: 438) because it requires self-improvement which likewise benefits capitalism.

Drawing upon Foucault's (1975/1991: 227) notion of problematisation, the following sections outline how these processes of hierarchy creation are used to construct unemployed people living in poverty both as a homogenous "underclass" at the bottom of, or outside, society, and as individuals who lack the character traits and behavioural norms of the rational self. This treatment is both a punishment that protects capitalism by excluding those who do not conform, and a disciplinary device to encourage conformance, which benefits capitalism.

2.2.3. The Unemployed "Underclass"

Foucault (*ibid*.) noted that it is the criminal, rather than the crime, which is problematised, and therefore punishment becomes correction and normalisation. Likewise, under neo-liberal capitalism people without paid employment are problematised, particularly where they are perceived as being dependent on welfare benefit payments. This perspective encourages the blaming of unemployed people for their own unemployment, rather than considering external factors which would lead to the economic order being questioned. Problematisation creates an, 'administrable domain' (Dean, 1995: 568). In other words, generating a problem via problematisation, necessitates and justifies intervention to solve that problem. With regards to unemployment, problematisation occurred when the condition of unemployment was separated out from the wider category of the poor, or people living in poverty, in order to provide the 'other' of the employment norm (Walters, 2000: 4). This shift from defining people as "poor" to defining them as "poor and unemployed", is also reflected in the use of the term "underclass". "Underclass" was previously used to refer to the poor but is now most closely associated with the long-term

unemployed (Gallie, 1994; Walters, 2000: 86), especially those who claim state welfare benefit payments (Dwyer, 2004; Dunn, 2010). Living in poverty, means subsisting on resources which are below a minimum decent standard of living (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2021), with unemployment being recognised as a significant risk factor for experiencing poverty (Brady, Finnigan & Hübgen, 2017). Austerity not only increases vulnerability to poverty (Estavo, Calado & Capucha, 2017) but appears to coincide with the increased stigmatising of poverty (McArthur & Reeves, 2019), supporting the justification of individual responsibility and punitive approaches. As such, those in poverty are imagined as a homogenous group separate from mainstream society (Lugo-Ocando, 2019), as is reflected in the concept of the "underclass", seen to be those people who are the most deprived, and who are thereby beneath the rest of society at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The stigma associated with this positioning has led to some denying that the terms 'poor' and 'poverty' describe their lives (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013), with the term 'hardship' being proposed as more appropriate (Dagdeviren, Donoghue & Meier, 2017). In relation to unemployment, the term 'disadvantaged' has been used (e.g. Egdell & McQuaid, 2016; Wright, Fletcher & Stewart, 2020) to indicate the unequal chance that those who are perceived at the bottom of society or are otherwise marginalised face. Disadvantage is seen to reflect not only the negative effect of social positioning but goes beyond economic factors to include other perceived 'barriers' to employment such as disability and criminal convictions.

However, the "underclass" cannot be considered to be a social class in terms of structural models of social class nor class consciousness, and similarly unemployed people are difficult to place within such models. Atkinson (2009: 900) noted that unemployed people, 'appear to be outside the class system' and that where to place unemployed people within formal social structures, 'is undoubtedly the longest-running controversy' (*ibid*.) in social class research. This is likely to be, in part, because structural models of social class are constructed based on employment and economic capital (Evans, 1992; Atkinson, 2009) which unemployed people living in poverty do not possess. In Marxist terms, class-consciousness is being aware of belonging to a social class based on a shared situation (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: 515). However, this does not apply to the "underclass" as it is a label applied to particular

populations, rather than one adopted by populations to describe themselves. For example, the “underclass” is typically resurrected during times of crisis to place blame outside neo-liberal capitalism, such as during the 2007-2008 recession (Welshman, 2013). Although the “underclass” may therefore be used in relational social class practices, such as othering, it tends to be excluded from structural social class models.

The label of ‘precariat’ was selected for the lowest social class in the Great British Class Survey (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Friedman, Laurison et al., 2015) in order to avoid stigmatising the poor and deprived who are typically associated with “underclass” (see section 2.2.3.). While Bradley (2014) likened the ‘precariat’ to the “underclass”, Standing (2011; 9), who popularised the term precariat, excluded the jobless from his definition, noting that those without a job have, 'no hope of social integration’ (*ibid*.). Marx sought to legitimise the political action of the proletariat class, from which the precariat in part gets its name, by distinguishing it from the 'rabble' of the lumpenproletariat, which was defined by its, 'refusal of work' (Thoburn, 2002; 440, 435). The lumpenproletariat was therefore not a class but a process of creating a group which is, 'cut-off from social relations.’ (*ibid*.; 436). Consequently, it could be said that the concept of the lumpenproletariat, rather than the precariat, is most similar to the perceived constituents of the “underclass”. However, people tend not to identify with such stigmatised terms, and thereby the inequalities related to such classifications tend to be viewed as ‘classed’ (Anthias, 2013). This relational practice of placing the disadvantaged unemployed outside normal society works to strengthen the position of those who are compliant within society and underlines the importance of being employed in being considered a social citizen. Those who do not meet these criteria must demonstrate that they are willing to comply with the social norms of the rational self, including self-blame and self-improvement, in order to be considered for a place in the social structure.

2.2.4. The Undeserving Unemployed

Although unemployed people are not compliant with the social norm of employment, they may demonstrate that they are deserving of support to be re-integrated into work and society by displaying what are perceived to be the

correct attitude, behaviours and emotions. Those deemed to be incompetent in this respect are accused of having a flawed character (Goffman, 1963: 14; Taylor, 2018) and are therefore considered undeserving of support (Redman, 2020). Thus, neo-liberal requirements serve a dual purpose as a moral code (Mirowski, 2009: 440) rooted in earlier arbitrary moral criteria used to categorise the poor into good and bad (Castel, 2003: 455). Underpinning this is the idea that the psychological impacts of unemployment are the most critical to resolve, and that any associated material deprivation can be overcome by a correct psychological disposition. The prominence of the psychological perspective on unemployment is rooted in deprivation theory, developed by Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel's (1933/2002) from their research in Marienthal, Austria, which is still considered to be, 'a landmark study in the social and psychological consequences of unemployment' (Boland, 2015a: 13). Jahoda (1982; 28) outlined the, 'two related major factors' of unemployment as, 'an inadequate standard of living and the psychological impact of being without a job.' However, despite these material aspects now being considered more significant than originally proposed by Jahoda (Griep, Baillien, Ysebaert & De Witte, 2015), greater prominence has subsequently been given to psychological deterioration. As such, deprivation theory has come to represent the psychological suffering of unemployed jobseekers, who experience their life as empty and lacking structure without paid work (Cole, 2007), with little consideration of underpinning material deprivation. Thus, it is believed that suffering endured by the disadvantaged unemployed can be overcome through psychological self-resilience, and related qualities such as, perseverance and grit (Taylor, 2018). If unemployed jobseekers do not meet these requirements they are blamed for their situation because it is considered that there is something wrong with them and thus, they are undeserving of reintegration into work and society.

The "underclass" is not only associated with unemployed people but is often used in a way which makes it synonymous with, 'unemployable' (Welshman, 2013: 2). The suffering associated with material deprivation means that the disadvantaged unemployed are focussed on survival, rather than the future focus that is required for capitalist progress and profit making. This includes accusations that the disadvantaged unemployed lack aspiration (Bright, 2012)

and motivation (Raffass, 2017) and are not, 'future-oriented' (Taylor, 2018: 404) because they lack correct attitude (Friedli & Stearn, 2015) and work ethic (Karren & Sherman, 2012). These lacks are viewed as inherent in their character, with the trait most commonly associated with the "underclass" is that they are perceived as, 'feckless' (e.g. Clarke & Newman, 2012; Wiggan, 2012; Taylor, 2018), defined as being weak, ineffective, worthless and irresponsible (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Similar arguments of this perceived link between poor character and lack of social mobility have been made since Victorian times (Taylor, 2018). This stigmatising of the disadvantaged unemployed compounds their ability to achieve re-employment. Thus, while capitalism generates such inequality to drive people to improve themselves in the name of progress, it is also effective in keeping those without appropriate resources to do so in their place at the bottom of, or outside, society. However, once this problematisation has occurred, it underpins the argument for state intervention, not to provide support and relief, but to correct and normalise. The following section considers how Foucault's (1998: 138) notion of biopower, through statistics, problematises specific sections of the population for intervention, namely with regards to this study the long-term, older, male unemployed.

2.2.5. Problematisation of Older, Long-Term Unemployed Men

Problematisation is supported by biopower, which gathers statistics about the rates of non-compliance within the population and uses this to develop enforceable norms (Taylor, D., 2013b: 177). Short-term unemployment was consolidated as the 'norm' of unemployment, as opposed to 'chronic' long-term unemployment, in the 1930s (Walters, 2000: 80-81). In the UK, long-term unemployment is typically classed as a continuous period of unemployment of over 12 months (OECD, 2021). In times of low overall unemployment levels, the long-term unemployed make up a larger proportion of total unemployment compared to times of high unemployment (Webster, 2005). This has led to long-term unemployment being considered a particular problem when unemployment overall is low, even though its relationship to total unemployment has been almost completely unvaried since the post-Second World War period (*ibid.*). However, while long-term unemployment has been a longstanding concern for intervention, the perceived problem of ageing demographics (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004) has redefined "working age" (Kulik,

Ryan, Harper & George, 2014) and created the expectation that people will need to work longer than they might previously have done (Department of Work & Pensions, 2017). In conjunction with changing gender norms associated with work, this has problematised older long-term unemployed men as a focus for intervention.

An “older worker” is typically defined as being aged over 50 years (Kautonen, Down & South, 2008; Desmette & Gaillard, 2008; Riach & Loretto, 2009) and this age boundary is also used in the formation of government policy (Kautonen, Down & South, 2008), including that relating to unemployment. Statistics demonstrate that UK unemployment levels for men are slightly higher than those of women for all age groups, standing at 3.9% and 3.6% respectively for all age groups as at February 2020 (Office for National Statistics, 2020b), and 2.8% and 2.6% respectively for those aged 50-64 (Office for National Statistics, 2020c). However, the male 50-64 years employment rate is much higher (77.1%) than the female 50-64 years employment rate (68.5%), meaning inactivity (neither working nor being classed as unemployed) is higher for older women (29.7%) than older men (20.7%) (*ibid.*). Thereby, the statistics appear to underpin a stronger need for intervention with older unemployed men.

Employment has long been considered to be central to male identity, and with gender divides still being perceived in roles both inside employment and wider society, there remains a lack of socially acceptable alternative roles for men. The expectation that a man will be the main earner for his family, reflected in the norm of “breadwinning man” has not diminished as far as has been assumed (Ralph, 2020). Employment is central to the form of masculinity most valued in capitalist society, or hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), which privileges working white middle-class men. Those not complying with these standards are considered to be subordinate because they are, ‘not conforming to expected masculine roles’ (Elliott, 2016: 254). Therefore, while it could be said that society maintains high expectations for male employment, older men may have internalised this over a longer period. For example, older men are assumed to be more attached to work-related identity (see section 2.4.4.1.), particularly when they have been

socialised in manual work from an early age (Willis, 1983; Fletcher, 2010; Bright, 2011) and grown up expecting to have, 'a job for life' (Ranzijn, Carson, Winefield & Price, 2006). However, changes in the external environment such as mass redundancies and decline in this type of role, and an increase in employment viewed to be more "feminine", as well as employer hiring processes being biased against those aged 50 years and over (Lyons, Wessel, Tai & Ryan, 2014), have created difficulties for such workers becoming re-employed. Nevertheless, the problem is seen to lie with the individuals themselves.

This focus on the self not only shifts blame from the economy to the individual but dispels the potentially greater danger seen to be posed by men in undermining power. Peterie et al. (2019) note how state power pacifies and individualises because unemployed people as, '*openly and collectively angry*' (*ibid*., italics in original) would have significant implications. Men are seen to have less control over their emotions and to be more likely to express anger (Jakupcak, Tull & Roemer, 2005) and violence (McCarry, 2007) and engage in deviant behaviours to cope with powerlessness and to assert masculinity, such as drinking alcohol (Coles, 2007; Baron & Boris 2007), having a laugh (Willis, 1983) and undertaking acts of minor public disorder (Giazitzoglu, 2014). Therefore, problematisation is able to build on the general characteristics imputed to the "underclass", implying that some sections of that population are more at risk of non-compliant behaviours, thereby apparently justifying the need to provide greater externally imposed control. As these categories intersect within the previously noted statistical category, it could be said that the problematisation of older, long-term unemployed men is a particular concern for governmentality.

2.3. Governmentality and the Welfare State

As governmentality focusses on discourse rather than lived experience (Boland, 2016: 340), this section provides an overview to inform the context of lived experience, rather than being a full, in-depth analysis, which is covered comprehensively in other sources (e.g. Walters, 2000; Boland, 2016). Those processes outlined in the previous section which construct long-term unemployed men as being non-compliant with social norms and therefore

outside the social order and in need of governance rationalises the need for intervention. Foucault's term *governmentality* is seen to cover two fields which are normally separate; governance and regulation, and governance of the self (Walters, 2000: 5). Governance of the self is the process of making oneself into an acceptable subject through behaviour which reflects the norms and values of society in the constitution of subjectivity (Taylor, D. 2013b: 175). As outlined above, the required relation to self is the rational self, which is strongly related to the norm of employment. A common interpretation of Foucault's concept is that governmentality focusses on the, 'conduct of conduct' (Dean, 1995: 561), or that government seeks to direct individual conduct (*ibid*.). In other words, governmentality teaches people how to conduct themselves, and those who are not able to self-govern must be governed more closely via external means.

Governance of the self represents a shift from the individual being passive towards requiring them to actively play a part in the formation of the required self. Formerly, individuals were subjected to close observation and control of every aspect of their daily lives via confinement in "total institutions" (Goffman, 1957) such as workhouses and labour camps (see Fletcher, 2015). However, as this was completely separate from what the day-to-day life of that inmate had been prior to their institutionalisation, as noted by Goffman (1957), it raised the question of whether the institution could reach or change that inmate's perceived "real" self. In order to fully infiltrate the inmate's life beyond the institutional walls the person themselves needs to play an active part in their subjectification by internalising the need to work upon themselves to ensure their re-integration into capitalist society via the market. This aligns with the shift from the Marxist notion of labour-power which conceives individuals abstractly as passive objects of supply and demand, to the neo-liberal requirement for, 'active economic subjects' (Foucault, 2010: 223). Therefore, the current approach to intervention in unemployment in the UK involves the enforcement of self-governance via the, '*active welfare state'* (Beck, 2007: 685, italics in original).

2.3.1. Active Welfare State

'Activation' is the process of compelling unemployed people to take all necessary steps to gain employment. By adopting the rational self and aligning their self-interest with that of the market, they are required to, 'willingly

transform themselves into ‘job-seekers’’ (Peterie et al., 2019: 2). Boland (2016) has described how governmentality compels jobseekers to take personal responsibility for the unpleasant consequences of unemployment by acting positive and presenting themselves as suitable for all jobs. At the same time, jobseekers are encouraged to be ‘realistic’ by, ‘abandoning inappropriate expectations’ (Eversberg, 2016: 173). Without undertaking these responsibilities, unemployed people are considered to have no right to seek welfare support (Raffass, 2017), and thus it may be removed via sanction until they comply. Although the Jobcentre cannot be considered a total institution in the sense that it does not physically confine individuals, when unemployed people enter the Jobcentre they experience some of the characteristics of total institutions. In particular, the requirement to become a jobseeker aligns with Goffman’s (1957: 49-50) notion of mortification, which describes the stripping of an individual’s sense of self when they enter a total institution. Similarly, on entering the Jobcentre system, unemployed people are homogenised, losing previous work identity or other form of social contribution, becoming merely one anonymous case, or Jobcentre ‘client’, amongst many others. It is through job seeking that they may individualise themselves by proving their apparent ‘worth’ (Boland, 2016: 348) based on their level of success in comparison to other jobseekers and whether their search subsequently ends successfully in employment.

Approaches to activation have been gradually strengthened since they gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, in particular since the “activation turn” in the 1990s, when the newly elected Labour party introduced new activation programmes, rather than reverse the previous Conservative government’s position. In general, the entrenchment of this approach over time has involved reducing the amount of support provided to unemployed people to re-enter the labour market through Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) and increasing the use of more punitive and constraining activation approaches. A controversial example of the latter is workfare approaches which require unemployed people to undertake work or training in order to continue receiving benefits. Workfare programmes have been accused of not improving the capabilities of unemployed people, but aiming to provide a labour supply, ‘for low paid and non-standard employment’ (Bartelheimer, Verd, Lehweβ-

Litzmann, Lopez-Andreu & Schmidt, 2012: 37). In the UK, the 'Work Programme' was a highly criticised form of workfare which required unemployed people to work for free in roles which rarely led to paid work (Freidli & Stearn, 2015). The Work Programme ceased in 2017 and was replaced by the Work and Health Programme. The new programme promises tailored support for people with disabilities and the long-term unemployed (Department for Work and Pensions, n.d. -b), and although it is not possible to break down job outcomes by age, 36% of those starting the North East programme up until February 2020 were aged 50 or older and 20% of all those on the programme in the North East had achieved a job outcome between March 2018 and August 2020 (Department for Work and Pensions, 2020). The programme has thus received similar criticism to its predecessor as it has been accused of low rates of getting people into work, especially when they have disabilities (Pring, 2019).

While the Work and Health Programme could potentially offer a more tailored service that is able to improve job outcomes in future, the previous Work Programme supported "creaming and parking" (Wiggan, 2015). This means that those unemployed who already have the skills and experience valued by employers move quickly back into unemployment, whereas those who need more support or investment languish within the Jobcentre system. It is a longstanding idea that people classed as unemployed are categorised based on the likelihood that they will become re-employed and is reflected in Marx's (1887: 444) concept of the reserve army of labour which hierarchised the unemployed into three segments: floating, latent and stagnant. In the broader social structure, the unemployed reserve army is considered to be below the employed working class and its sole function is to regulate wages (*ibid*. 146-147). In other words, having some unemployed people benefits capitalism because employers can pay a lower wage when there is a ready supply of labour. This is echoed in Bartelheimer et al.'s (2012) notion outlined above that workfare aims to fill low-paid jobs by forcing unemployed people to, 'take any job as quickly as possible' (Egdell and McQuaid, 2016). However, for those parked at the bottom of the unemployed hierarchy, this fails to recognise contextual factors and the 'scarring' effect that unemployment can have on future employment prospects (Egdell & Beck, 2020). Those resources which

employers tend to value, like formal qualifications and certificates, work to maintain those at the top of the hierarchy, rather than allow those at the bottom to progress upwards (Willis, 1983: 127-128), even if they could be provided as part of Jobcentre employment support. Thus, the likelihood of becoming re-employed is different, yet approaches towards supporting this are relatively standardised. Even those who are unlikely to find paid work are compelled to continue to behave as if this is possible or otherwise risk losing their benefits via sanction. This responsibility is enforced via an individual welfare contract.

2.3.2. The Welfare Contract

Neo-liberal principles identify that a competitive order can only be effective if it is facilitated by, 'a proper legal and institutional framework.' (Statement of Aims of the Mont Pelerin Society, 1947, quoted in Plehwe, 2009: 23). This governing and enforcement of economic rules was referred to by Foucault (2010: 161) as the juridical framework, one aspect of which is contractual relations. Neo-liberalism's assumption that individual freedom is obtained via contractual relations pre-supposes that individuals are able to choose to engage in contracts which are beneficial to them. However, given the purpose of contracts to enforce a competitive order, relations are inherently unequal and dependent upon position within that order, and thereby people may be forced to enter contracts under threat of necessity or coercion. For example, with regards to necessity, a worker who needs their wage to survive is pressed to sign an employment contract, whereas an employer has no such necessity of the worker and can therefore contract freely (Castel, 2003: 180). Unemployed people who need their benefit payment in order to survive must therefore agree to the conditions set out in the welfare contract, even though they may be unlikely to find re-employment.

Those unemployed who are looking for work can apply to receive the Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) benefit payment, which may be combined with Universal Credit, which requires them to sign an individual welfare contract which sets out their obligations to prove their ongoing eligibility. This focuses on a contractual commitment to undertake 35 hours of job search activity per week, including time spent at Jobcentre appointments, or if working less than 35 hours to make up the remaining time with job search (Fletcher & Wright,

2019). This time is considered to be the threshold for defining full-time work (UK Government, n.d.), and therefore for those who sign this contract and become a benefit claimant, job seeking is effectively a full-time role. The contract also sets the terms by which it will be monitored and enforced, and as such it sets the limits beyond which, if transgressed by the claimant, they may be subjected to legal sanction in line with the terms of the contract. Therefore, although a contract in itself is not a form of discipline, 'discipline may be underwritten by a contract' (Foucault, 1975/1991: 223). As such, although the Jobcentre is not a total institution, it exerts a high level of control over an individual's life. Unemployed claimants are subjected to various forms of surveillance, both inside and outside the Jobcentre environment, which broadly aims to ensure that they are meeting the conditions of their contract. However, it also indicates a level of suspicion that unemployed claimants are deviant, or potentially deviant, and attempting to avoid re-employment. This level of surveillance, both overt and covert, encourages compliance and self-governance by inducing the feeling amongst unemployed people, such as the men in this study, that they are constantly being monitored. In particular, this is reflected in Foucault's (*ibid.*: 202) discussion of panoptical surveillance.

2.3.3. Surveillance and the See/Being Seen Dyad

Surveillance is a form of disciplinary power which is used to normalise particular behaviours. In other words, when individuals are aware that they are under surveillance they are more likely to conform with prescribed behavioural norms. Surveillance techniques were perfected in the prison, a form of total institution, before being used in other institutions and even private homes. Foucault (*ibid*.: 211) referred to this as, '*The swarming of disciplinary mechanisms*' (italics in original). Swarming aligns with gathering information about individuals and their daily lives such as, 'how many beds there are in the house and what sleeping arrangements are' (*ibid*.). This information enables people's behaviour, practices and living arrangements to be compared to the norm. Thus, it is not specifically concerned with what people do, but the extent to which their lives differ from the norm. Thereby, the surveillance of unemployed people may extend beyond compliance with the job seeking responsibilities they have agreed to under their welfare contract.

The sense that one is being continually observed is reflected in the notion of the panopticon which can be built into physical spaces, procedures, and also be internalised. The panopticon, an arrangement of space designed by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century, was concerned with individualised observation, as well as characterisation and classification, originally of animals, and later of people. Although the foremost example of the full implementation of the panopticon is represented by the architecture of the prison, the principles of power reflected in the panopticon have been extended to other built structures and spaces in order to allow hierarchised surveillance. Foucault (*ibid*.: 202) noted that a function of a panopticon is the dissociation of the 'see/being seen dyad', being that those who are being observed are, 'totally seen, without ever seeing' (*ibid*.), and the observer, 'sees everything without ever being seen' (*ibid*.). This means that panoptical structures undertaking surveillance may be partially or fully hidden, such as within digital systems. To only be seen without seeing reduces the observed to an object and exposes their vulnerability, as seeing and being seen is a fundamental form of reversibility. However, while power has the potential to be discreet and silent, and thus unseen, it is at the same time indiscreet because it is everywhere (Foucault, 1998: 93). When power is everywhere, but not necessarily seen at any moment, one may be under surveillance without being able to be certain that is the case. For the long-term unemployed, suspicion of surveillance therefore may become a constant background or atmosphere of day-to-day life.

While unemployed people can see themselves being surveilled through the overt security procedures within Jobcentres, or during supervised training or job search, they are subject to an increasing level of digital surveillance, which may be covert. The expectation that unemployed people engage with the Jobcentre digitally has been accelerated and deepened by the ceasing of most face-to-face appointments during the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic (Menendez, 2020). This follows on from the isolation experienced by some unemployed people after the closure of local Jobcentres (Finn, 2018) forcing travel to centralised, and thereby more impersonal, services. Universal Jobsmatch, the Jobcentre's online vacancy search system, was central to the shift from in-person support to online digital self-help. Described by Fletcher and Wright (2018: 332) as '*The Universal Jobsmatch panopticon*' and, 'a digital

panopticon' (*ibid*., italics in original), it is considered to be a particularly intrusive form of surveillance and is used to gather evidence to validate benefit sanctions. There is a general assumption that such processes of digitalisation have an equally positive impact for everyone, such as improving access. However, Novikova (2000) identified that it represents both opportunities and threats, with disadvantaged unemployed people likely facing more threats due to the potential for digitisation to compound precarity and job insecurity (Sheen, 2020).

Surveillance is effective as a method of control as it is able to both gather information in order to compare individuals to norms, and also encourage compliance with those same norms on the understanding that they are constantly being observed and assessed. The following section considers a key norm enforced via the welfare contract is that of working time.

2.3.4. Time as a tool of order

Job seeking impose a capitalistic norm of time meaning quantity of time spent applying for a quantity of jobs comes before considerations of quality of jobs applied for. In analysing capitalism, Marx (1847: 59) emphasised that,

> Time is everything, man is nothing; he is at most time's carcase. Quality no longer matters. Quantity alone decides everything: hour for hour, day for day

This focus on the importance of quantity of time spent for the benefit of capitalism leads to a struggle for what might be referred to as "free time". This struggle is, 'the most direct expression of class conflict in the capitalist economy' (Giddens, 1995: 120). Capitalistic time aligns with objective time, which is the idea that time is separate from human activity, represented by time as partitioned into hours and days, objectively measured and recorded by clocks and other timepieces. The acceptance within Western civilisation of this form of time as natural enables the perception that time can be controlled and thus can be harnessed as, 'a tool of order' (Muldoon, 2006: 26). This first involves comparing individual uses of time to the established norm. Subjective experiences of time are different to objective time, given that they are unique to each person's particular lived experience, leading Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009: 497) to conclude that each person is, 'the upsurge of time'. The attempt to

simulate capitalist working time amongst unemployed people is rooted in Jahoda's (1982) latent deprivation theory which proposed that the time structure provided by employment is required for healthy psychosocial functioning and that the absence of time structure through unemployment damages an individual's health (Nordenmark, Strandh & Layte, 2006). This is assumed to be to the extent that, for unemployed men, time without work has no meaning (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel, 1971/2009: 67). However, as Sage (2019) has noted, it is the internalisation of norms and the social pressure felt when not complying with those norms that means unemployed people suffer, rather than via the absence of those norms themselves. Although subjective notions of time are essential to experiencing it as a concept, subjective time must also be suppressed because it allows non-capitalist interpretations of the usefulness of, and enjoyment obtained from, how time is spent based on individual experiences and perceptions. Instead, spending any significant quantity of time without creating capitalistic, economic value is considered to be a waste of time.

When an unemployed person is viewed merely for their potential to contribute to capitalistic profit, while unemployed they are laying idle. It is a common accusation against unemployed people that they are idle and, 'doing nothing' (Boland & Griffin, 2015: 5; Boland, 2015a: 17). The internalisation of the norm of capitalist time by unemployed people leads them to also feel that time spent unemployed is empty, something that unemployed people who have stopped defining themselves in terms of work or career do not experience (Gabriel, Gray & Goregaoker, 2010). A typical institutional tool for the elimination of waste and idleness is to impose a time structure, or timetable (Foucault, 1975/1991: 154). Thus, the contracted hours of unemployed people claiming benefits must be filled with "useful" activities such as applying for jobs, basic training courses and work experience, based on the belief that they require work-like structure. Dean (1995: 574) noted that the activities these unemployed people are required to undertake are, 'a kind of 'Taylorization' [sic]'. This involves the breaking down of objective time and accounting for the use of each minute, reflecting capitalist time systems. In particular, "time-and-motion", attributed to Frederick Taylor and his "scientific management" approach aims to ensure more efficient productivity by accounting for time

down to the hundredth of a minute. The focus on the necessity of unemployed people spending a large quantity of time applying for many jobs is rooted in the belief that higher job search intensity leads to re-employment. As job search intensity is seen to decrease after age 40 (Zacher & Bock, 2014), it seemingly justifies the supervision of such activity amongst the older unemployed to ensure that time is well spent, accurately recorded and meets contractual requirements. While these interventions attempt to improve the effective use of objective time, subjective time is devalued through it being utilised in making unemployed welfare benefit claimants wait for things that they want or need.

As Kubler-Ross (1975; 17) noted, there is power in making people wait. Waiting generates uncertainty, which is seen as a more effective punishment than violence (Foucault, 1975/1991: 96). As outlined in section 2.3.2., unlike the employer, or institution, unemployed people living in poverty often do not have the privilege of being able to wait, as they need their money urgently to be able to survive. However, periods of waiting are often associated with making a claim for welfare support. Sometimes the length of the wait is known, which provides a finality which cannot be challenged, and at other times the wait is indefinite. Particularly with regards to sanctions the potential length of these waiting periods have increased over time from a maximum of six weeks up until 1986, to a period of up to 156 weeks (3 years). Although this maximum period was recently reduced, the possibility of open-ended sanctions remains (Wright, Fletcher & Stewart 2020). As subjective experiences of time are different, when a person has to wait for something important to them without the certainty when or if they will receive it, it has a significant individual effect, something which is not reflected in objective time. Thus, even relatively short periods of waiting out sanctions have been found to damage the health of unemployed welfare benefit claimants (Adler, 2016). However, with uncertainty and waiting conceived as justified punishments for non-compliance, these cases are framed as individual transgressions rather than an issue with how the welfare state operates. When unemployed claimants are continually subjected to this treatment its constant uncertain presence may teach them to expect the worst, or even to expect the unexpected by drawing on and projecting forward past experience. This is a response to the trauma inflicted by welfare state institutional practices, such as those enacted through Jobcentre Plus, which is

further discussed in section 2.4.1. This idea that unemployed welfare claimants deserve such punitive treatment is reflected in the notion of institutional inertia.

2.3.5. Institutional Inertia

Merleau-Ponty's disenchantment with Marxism is said to have occurred primarily because it failed to recognise, 'the inertia of the infrastructure' (Merleau-Ponty, 1973: 64 quoted in Spurling, 1977: 106). Institutions' infrastructures are fundamentally resistant to change, as events don't destroy institutional practice, but instead become subsumed under its laws (Miller, 1976). Change is thus slow and incremental, rather than sudden and transformational, such as the 'punitive turn' (Fletcher & Wright, 2018: 323) of welfare reform. This reflects the slowly tightening spiral of a centripetal linguistic force, which forms the monologic perspective on unemployment. In other words, each 'turn' builds upon and strengthens the already established perspective that the nature of unemployment and unemployed welfare benefit claimants requires punitive intervention. Without these underpinning assumptions such an approach would not be possible and can therefore only occur slowly as essentially this reduces the potential for struggle against it. For example, welfare claimants have experienced changes as a, 'creeping conditionality' (Dwyer, 2004) which has gradually ensured that social rights are conditional on fulfilling responsibilities for activation. As welfare state institutions, particularly Jobcentre Plus, have a central role in administering unemployment, its practices have an important influence on how unemployed people are perceived by wider society. As with broader economic practices, welfare state ideology is protected from criticism by blaming unemployment on unemployed people. A perspective that is unable to look beyond the individual cannot consider other reasons why unemployed people do not become re-employed, such as lack of local jobs or unemployment stigma itself. However, it is these sorts of questions which begin to undermine the current economic order of neo-liberal capitalism, and thereby remain largely unasked and unanswered. A key weakness of monologic perspectives, such as that of unemployment, is that they present themselves as objective facts. This aligns with Stone's (2013: 143) assertion that many modern truths are unethical because they are only epistemological. This means the ontological aspects of the same experiences are not addressed. Thereby, to understand a

phenomenon like long-term unemployment, “as it really is”, it is necessary to engage fully with its primary, ontological nature. This is considered in the following section which explores embodiment as the fundamental means by which an individual engages with the world and others and discusses gesture and metaphor as a means by which this originary experience begins to be brought to language.

2.4. An Embodied Perspective on Unemployment

Despite the requirement for the rational self imposing a seeming uniformity on experience, capitalism’s generation of inequality in order to motivate progress means that experience is unequal and thus, different. Those socialised in manual labour experience bodily foregrounding, rather than the bodily disappearance required by the rational self. Willis (1983: 3, 150) outlines how young, ‘working class lads’ are prepared from an early age for a type of work that is expected to be physically arduous, painful and dangerous. They are encouraged to develop character traits which align with the work they anticipate they will be undertaking in the future, as adults. The physical nature of this work means these character traits have an overtly embodied nature, such as the requirement to be hard and tough. It is also highly gendered, requiring physical strength and endurance, typically seen as masculine qualities. These experiences of work also mark the body through developing muscles, tanned skin from outdoor labouring, rough hands and injuries. The body thereby becomes a mark of gender, class, labour, and thus, identity (Baron & Boris, 2007). Therefore, people living in particular places may learn a particular bodily orientation related to local industry, even before they work in those industries.

However, the neo-liberal market restructuring described in section 2.2.1., led to many UK industries closing or moving. Manufacturing and mining industries were most affected, with the geographic, urban location of these employers meaning the large-scale loss of employment concentrated in specific places can be considered structural (Webster, 2005). Those people living in these places who had developed a thoroughly embodied disposition towards local industry were oriented towards a future which no longer existed. This habitual bodily relation to the world is not something which can be easily changed or forgotten, as the psychological approach to job loss suggests (see section

2.4.4.1.). Overall, these changes have resulted in greater inequality through economic and social polarisation, with cities experiencing the greatest gaps in wealth (Cumbers, Helms & Swanson, 2010). Those areas which were already deprived, with people living in poverty, tend to have been the worst affected. The consequences of pushing people further into poverty and the effect on individual bodies has led to economic restructuring being criticised as a form of avoidable violence and state-sanctioned social murder (Grover, 2019). However, as neo-liberal capitalism does not blame the state or corporations for obeying the market, it cannot accept a structural explanation. While from the psychological perspective of the rational self, which is disconnected from the world, these experiences cannot be acknowledged as painful, Merleau-Ponty's ontology of flesh (see section 3.2.) enables the recognition of the fundamental connection between body and world, and therefore why changes to the world may be wounding to the body.

2.4.1. Unemployment as Bodily Trauma

Being embodied means being fundamentally intertwined with the world. This is reflected in Merleau-Ponty's concept of the *flesh of the world*, which he defined as, 'a spatial and temporal pulp where the individuals are formed by differentiation.' (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 114). This provides a representation of how each body is immersed in the world as an inseparable part. Although, through conscious reflection, a self may be constructed that sees itself as separate from the world, to be separate is not possible, as being in the world is the nature of being embodied. Thus, the concept of the rational self is not an accurate representation of the relation between body and world. The self is also, in part, within the world, as the world is within the self. While more detail regarding this is outlined within section 3.2., a brief understanding is outlined here in order to explain now changes to a body's world are experienced mutually. The connection between bodies and industries outlined in the previous section is described in Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2009: 278) terms as, 'intentional threads'. These are established gradually, through experience, and allow the body to habitually engage with its world. Thereby, the way in which the things of the world influence, draw, attract or repel a person, or even the extent to which they are noticed by that person, are bodily experiences developed over time. As these strategies are habitual, they may disappear from

explicit awareness and thereby, the first stage in attempting to change these strategies is to bring these bodily habits to conscious awareness and attempt to control or change them, a practice which is extremely difficult (Tarr, 2008). Local industry closure can thereby be traumatic for anyone whose world it formed a part of, not only psychologically, but bodily, because it damages that person's world and forces them to change their habitual engagement with the world.

Certain practices are recommended for overcoming such bodily trauma, however, these require the ability to connect with others and acknowledge past experience (e.g. Herman, 2002) which are not enabled by individualised and psychologised approaches of governing unemployed people. Habitual strategies themselves may be a means of coping with trauma by providing, 'a sense of safety, mastery, and agency' (Pylvanainen, 2003) which underpins survival. Bodily memory also enables future trauma to be tackled by retaining an understanding of how the previous trauma was survived (Behnke, 2012: 90-92). Memories are held in the body, and there is evidence that placing the body in a similar position to the earlier experience allows easier recall (Dijkstra, Kaschak & Zwaan, 2007). Therefore, overcoming trauma may involve processing and retaining that experience, rather than forgetting it, as sensemaking that has a therapeutic effect (Gabriel, Gray & Goregaoker, 2010; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012: 126). However, positive stories of past employment that may enable unemployed people to cope with trauma are dismissed as nostalgia as they do not fit the concept of capitalist time which requires a, 'deliberate discarding of the past' (Chaney, 2002: 152). This means that structural violence can remain unresolved because it is held unprocessed in the body and may therefore be re-experienced again in the present (Caldwell, 2012: 258). The following sections outline how bodily trauma can emerge through metaphorical expression and discusses particular metaphors used to express the experience of unemployment. In general, these metaphors allude to how the experience of being stigmatised as being at the bottom of, or outside, the social order feels like metaphorical "death" to the long-term unemployed men in this study.

2.4.2. Metaphorical Expression

Metaphors are not just words used in speech, they also relate to the body. Metaphors are a way in which implicit, unconscious bodily experiences begin to be reflected upon in preparation for being brought to speech. They are thus a connection between the primary experience phenomenology aims to reach and its expression verbally and multimodally. In Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2009: 217) terms, metaphors can be considered a means of, 'singing' the world', or expressing bodily experience of the world through gesture and words. For example, one of the participants in Kolter et al.'s (2012: 208) study of body memory and metaphor performed a swinging movement pattern three times with their upper body before smiling and verbalising this movement with the explanation, '"My life's like a wave"'. Metaphors enable speech to retain an essence of the material world and can connect recent experience with other earlier experiences. In particular, ontological metaphors resonate with embodied experiences and can support understanding of abstract concepts by comparing them to something tangible (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003: 25). Metaphors thereby enable the expression of things which are otherwise difficult to describe by comparing them to something which is already understood. As it takes time for metaphors to develop from experience to movement to speech, they may also support sensemaking and enable similar future experiences to be dealt with more effectively. Fundamentally, this sensemaking experience occurs with, and for, others. Gestures are made, and words are spoken, largely for others to see and hear. In Merleau-Ponty's ontology, speaking is not the external representation of the thought (van Manen, 2009: 129): thoughts are formed externally through dialogue with others. Thus, dialogue is fundamentally intersubjective because the aim is to be understood, by the self and by others. When dialogue is effective it creates a 'common ground' of reciprocity in which the speakers recognise each other as subjects, whether they are in agreement or not (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: 413). Thereby each of the following metaphors enables the reader or listener to relate to the bodily experience of what it feels like to be an older, long-term unemployed man.

2.4.3. Metaphor: Unemployed as Animals

The use of animal metaphors signals that animals are seen as being fundamentally different to humans, although sharing in some human-like traits. In some cases, this may be a positive association, for example, a lion metaphor has been used to indicate bravery (Strawn, 2005: 15), nobility and strength (Santa Ana, 1999). In contrast, animals may also be used to designate negative qualities or populations, such as the use of vermin metaphors to describe immigrants (Marshall & Shapiro, 2018). This indicates the relation between the use of animal metaphors and notions of hierarchy, reflecting not only the perception that humans are superior to non-human animals, but the belief that some humans are superior to other humans. This sense of order has historic religious and moral connotations reflected in conventional taxonomies such as the "Great Chain of Being", which places all worldly things in a hierarchy, and is seen to be embedded in Western thought (Lakoff & Turner, 1989: 167). Thus, in Western cultures the order of humans above animals is seen as natural. However, metaphors create a relation between human and animal hierarchies by mapping human traits onto animals and vice versa. This comparison of animals to humans, based on human criteria, reinforces the original hierarchy. For example, based on the human criteria for language, communication, culture and time, it is concluded that animals do not anticipate their own future needs and thereby lack agency (Seaton, 2013). Therefore, the use of animal metaphors to hierarchise locates certain populations outside the "human" hierarchy, and thus define them as non-human. Goffman (1963: 3) noted that a person who is stigmatised and thus excluded from full social acceptance is believed to be, 'not quite human.' Parallels can be drawn between some of the criteria applied to animals and accusations made against the unemployed conceived as part of an "underclass", such as not being future-orientated (see section 2.2.4.) and thereby it can be seen how such mapping of traits between animals and humans might occur.

The idea of animals as inferior to humans contrasts with Merleau-Ponty's view of both human and non-human intertwining in the flesh of the world in which there are, 'strange anticipations or caricatures of the human in the animal' (Merleau-Ponty, 2003: 214). This emphasises that animals adapt to their world as humans do and, because they are part of the same world, they have a way

of understanding each other. Animals are thereby different to humans, but not necessarily lesser. However, the hierarchical positioning of animals as inferior is used to justify that it is not necessary to treat them ethically (Seaton, 2013) nor in accordance with human rights (Santa Ana, 1999). Entitlement to animal rights may depend on the level of socialisation of the animal with humans, as domesticated animals tend to be given more protections than those considered to be food or resources. Therefore, as with separating the good and bad poor (see section 2.2.4.), animals are separated into categories of “wild” and “docile” and must act in accordance with the latter category if they are to be domesticated and socialise with humans.

2.4.3.1. Wildness and Making Docile

As Foucault (1975/1991: 292) noted, wildness is seen as the opposite of civilization. It is the aim of progress to conquer that which is wild, it being seen as, ‘barren, terrible; even sinister’ (Smith, 2010; 20). Likewise, wild animals are seen as something that should be feared because they are viewed as being unable to control their wild impulses. Thereby, that which is outside the social order is viewed as wild and non-compliant and must be brought under control if it is to be afforded a place in that order. In other words, they must become docile. Foucault (1975/1991: 137) noted that the first stage in obedience, and thus docility, is the control of the body. Thus, the animal must overcome its wild nature and form a new habitual engagement with the world that benefits human society. The close control of time, space and movement is seen to be a central way that docility, bodily control and increased utility can be achieved (*ibid*: 137). The panopticon reflects the transference of this concept from animal to human, originally being the design for an animal menagerie and later becoming the model for other institutions in which individuals can be observed, classified and improved (see section 2.3.3.). It is via this disciplinary process that the individual is separated from the mass and is “made” (Foucault, 1975/1991: 170). In adopting the rational self, the individual must assume the Cartesian dualism of body and mind. Through this, the mind is seen to be able to control and suppress the body as the perceived source of impulsive expressions and thus the individual disciplines themselves to become, ‘conformist [and] docile’ (Heyes, 2013: 163). Docile individuals who comply with social norms are able to be incorporated into the social order. Those who are unable to implement

such self-discipline remain “wild” and necessitate external control of the body, space and time.

When animal metaphors have been applied to populations seen as lesser than wider society, it has been found to be for the purposes of legitimating wider political agendas and supporting changes in policy which have a negative impact on those people conceived as animals. Specifically, these metaphors are applied in a way which focusses on the behaviour of the target population as animal-like, and thus deserving of lesser treatment, such as disinvestment and requiring control. For example, Santa Ana (1999) found that immigrants were likened to animals and criticised during an economic downturn, framed as straining public finances, despite previously being seen to serve a purpose by taking job roles that others did not want. Animal metaphors have been used to influence societal opinion such as engendering feelings of revulsion (Haslam, Loughman & Sun, 2011) and disgust (Marshall & Shapiro, 2018) which appear to justify the poor treatment of immigrants. Historic uses of animal metaphors in relation to unemployed people living in poverty appealed to positive social opinions of their plight, such as Hampton’s (2013) analysis of 1920s and 1930s cartoons, one of which depicts unemployed people as, ‘Old Mother Hubbard’s dog, who has no bone’ (*ibid*: 686). Both the first and last examples represent the use of animal metaphors as a mechanism to apportion blame outside the economy by accusing immigrants and politicians respectively as being responsible. While the image of a dog with no bone encouraged social sympathy for unemployed people, the immigrant examples actively encourage social exclusion demonstrating the power of such metaphors to shape social ordering.

These conceptions of whole populations as animals have no individual aspect, with negative characteristics being applied to the whole population to justify lesser treatment. This links to the metaphor of the unemployed, conceived as a homogenous population at the bottom of society, as meat, as well as death. Meat is a resource produced when an animal is killed. Thus, some animals are viewed as ‘killable’ (Colombino & Giaccaria, 2016) as their death serves their human-given purpose which is seen as being for the greater good. This is enabled by viewing animals as part of a mass, such as a herd or shoal, in

which it is difficult to see how an individual life counts (Buller, 2013). The notion of meat as a consumable product does not recognise the life of the providing animal, only its purpose to nourish others. Applying this as a metaphor to unemployment, when unemployed people are viewed as a mass, such as through statistics, it is difficult to recognise each of the unemployed ethically as individual persons. Thus, similar to the notion of killable life, the unemployed can be seen as 'disposable' (Bauman, 1997: 59). As when an animal's sole purpose is to become meat, when an individual's sole purpose is to make an economic contribution, once they are unemployed there is, 'no 'rational reason' for their continuing presence.' (*ibid*.). Thereby, it can be seen how the aim of biopower, through defining target populations, is to, 'foster life or disallow it to the point of death' (Foucault 1998: 138). This represents an ambiguity that blurs the boundaries between life, metaphorical death and physical death which, while discussed further in section 2.4.4.2., is also represented in the metaphor of meat as something dead, yet momentarily purposeful to life.

2.4.3.2. Meat and Masculinity

The final stage of transition between the animal metaphor and the following metaphor of death, is that of meat. As outlined above, those at the bottom of society, such as the unemployed "underclass" are seen as disposable, likened metaphorically to killable animal life. There is a strong relation between meat and hierarchy, with meat eating representing affluence and high living standards (Beardswell & Keil, 1997: 214). Meat represents power, particularly that of the human over the animal which is consumed, and their ability to control 'wild' nature (Fiddes, 2004: 2-3). Killing represents an older form of sovereign power in which the body is the king's property and thus only the king has the right to torture and kill (Foucault, 1975/1991: 63, 109). The metaphor of feeling treated like meat is typically used by women to describe the effect of the male gaze which reduces them to, 'a passive, anonymous and voiceless body.' (Glapka, 2018: 94). Meat is thus considered to be thoroughly an object, without subjectivity and without life, and thereby lacking the potential to become human-like. Meat is merely a commodity to be processed and consumed. While meat is disempowered, it gives power to its consumer. This consumption of meat is thereby closely associated with masculinity, with there being an, 'overt association between meat eating and virile maleness' (Adams, 2015:

xxxiv). For a man, seen as the typical consumer of meat and flesh, to feel that they are themselves metaphorical meat may represent feelings of being subordinated to hegemonic masculinity, as outlined in section 2.2.5.

Meat also represents a number of transitions in form. First, that of the living animal to meat which, 'cannot but be mediated by slaughtering and death' (Colombino & Giaccaria, 2016; 1046). Thus, meat is the acceptable product of violence against animals (Adams, 2015: xxxv). This violence is hidden behind meat's value as a consumable product; its duality is reflected in being both something dead and that which is considered necessary to life. Prior to its death, an animal still has the potential to be wild and uncontrollable, whereas in the form of meat it has a firm identity, is inert, and is thus thoroughly controlled. However, although meat is passive, through its consumption it is absorbed into something active as it fuels strength (*ibid.*: xxvii). Once meat is consumed it is incorporated into the body, thus receding into the background and ultimately becoming invisible. Likewise, in Douglas' (1984: 160) anthropological analysis of dirt, to ensure that something is, 'dissolved and rotted away', as meat is by digestive processes, is the last metaphorical stage in destroying something which does not fit with societal order. Thus, to be treated as meat is not only to dehumanise and objectify, meat is to disappear.

2.4.4. Unemployment as Social Death

Both the metaphors presented so far relate indirectly to death, in that animals may be viewed as killable, and meat is a form of a dead animal. Through the third metaphor of death, the Case Workers were referred to as body snatchers, and thus indirectly, unemployed people like the men in this study are conceived as corpses. The connection between death and social ordering in each of the metaphors is explored via the concept of social death.

The notion of "social death" was first developed when considering how people approaching physical death are treated by others and the extent and form of their social interactions. In particular, Glaser and Strauss' (1966) study of interactions between dying patients, their family and hospital staff, and Sudnow's (1967) ethnography of how dying patients are cared for, are considered influential. However, this focus on physical death has since been

viewed as narrow (Sweeting & Gilhooly, 1991), and the concept of social death has been applied to a wider range of experiences, such as slavery (Patterson, 1982), dementia (Sweeting & Gilhooly, 1997), genocide (Card, 2003), and imprisonment (Henley, 2018a). This has led some to conclude that the concept is being used too broadly, and that it should be reserved only for exceptional circumstances (Kralova, 2018: 12). Kralova's model draws upon a wide range of social death literature to define three key "losses": all, or most, of which are seen to need to occur before social death can be pronounced. These are loss of social identity, loss of social connection and losses associated with the body through bodily disintegration (*ibid.*). In the following, it is discussed that arguably long-term unemployment meets each of these criteria. However, Kralova (2018: 6) concludes that unemployment is the loss of a 'role' and therefore unlikely to constitute social death. Here it is argued that the importance of personhood and its connection to employed identities is underestimated. As under neo-liberal capitalism unemployed people are deemed no long worthy of an ethical relation, it is proposed that it is the absence of reciprocity which is central to social death. This foregrounds the moral, and ethical, considerations of social death, reflected in non-recognition of personhood and the absence of effective dialogue, both of which are rooted in nonreciprocity. While ethical concerns are central to earlier empirical studies of social death (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1966: 6), Kralova (2018) sought to avoid the ethical issues seen to be associated with these studies by undertaking a theoretical analysis. Considering social death from an ontological perspective allows the trauma of long-term unemployment to be recognised without the necessity to categorise its severity in comparison with other forms of suffering, instead considering trauma from the perspective of the individual sufferer.

2.4.4.1. Unemployment Conceived as Loss

Kralova's (2018) first criteria in assessing whether social death has occurred is loss of social identity. An identity is considered to be an individual's, 'subjectivity construed [understanding] of who they were, are and desire to become' (Brown, 2015: 20). Social identity acknowledges the role played by others in identity construction and recognition, and as such, all identities can be considered social (Jenkins, 2014: 18). When taken at face value, it can be argued that this category is met by the unemployed men in this study.

Unemployment is seen to begin with the event of 'job loss' (Gallo, Bradley & Dubin, 2006; Gowan, 2014), which has been likened to, 'sudden death' (Age counts, 2000: 148, quoted in Ainsworth & Hardy, 2009; 1207). In general, job loss has been found to lead to negative effects on health, especially mental health (Thill, Houssemand & Pignault, 2018), including stress, anxiety and depression (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg & Kinicki, 2005). In line with the consideration of job loss and subsequent unemployment as largely a psychological event, the main cause of mental suffering is seen to be the loss of a central identity associated with work, typically referred to as work identity (Walsh & Gordon, 2008), or work-related identity (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014; Shepherd & Williams, 2018) which is often central and highly valued to individuals (Shepherd & Williams, 2018). Successfully overcoming job loss is seen to depend on the individual's ability to accept it and overcome these associated negative feelings (Vanherke, Kirves, De Cuyper, Verbruggan et al., 2015). In addition, they are compelled to, 'let go' (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014: 68) of their old work-related identity, 'cope with' unemployment (Paul, Hassel & Moser, 2018: 60) and ultimately regain control of themselves (Newman, 1988: 51) if they wish to become re-employed. This aligns with a view of a psychological rational self that can control itself and its reactions, and as such exert control over the world.

As formal conceptions of identity tend to focus on this internal aspect (Watson, 2008), it is conceived as being determined internally and projected onto the world. As such, work-related identity is seen as something which an individual can create, develop and modify through identity work, 'play' and experimentation, drawing on existing skills, knowledge and experience. This psychological focus means that the ability to create a new work-related identity is viewed as only being constrained by 'mindset' (Shepherd & Williams, 2018), rather than external restrictions such as lack of local jobs, resources, or power. For example, work-related identity is typically considered in relation to higher-level and prestigious jobs such as managers and doctors (Watson, 2008). Those who have held these roles are able to draw upon their previous status and skills, which is not open to those who have lost a lower-level job. From the identity perspective, higher-status job loss may be more traumatic because individuals are considered to be less attached to a low-status job, especially if

they can quickly and easily find another at the same level (Shepherd & Williams, 2018). However, the negative experience of unemployment is more ubiquitous than this. Thus, it is proposed that suffering is not solely induced by "loss" of identity, but by the non-recognition of identity by others, and additionally that it is an associated "loss" of personhood, or non-recognition of personhood, which underpins non-recognition of identity, especially in cases where the unemployed are disadvantaged and therefore present an identity which is not valued by capitalist society.

2.4.4.2. Loss of Personhood and Reciprocity

Personhood refers to what it means to be a person and is the overriding moral status that people have in common, regardless of the various affiliations which form identity (Splitter, 2015: 2). It is considered to be embodied, and is thus ontological and relational (Splitter, 2017). In this sense, personhood should remain constant regardless of a person's identity, and respecting that personhood would mean that "losing" a particular identity should not affect their status as a person. This can be seen as being compatible with Merleau-Ponty's (1964a: 16) concept of the flesh of the world, whereby people are differentiated within the same flesh. The self is differentiated upon reflection, the process via which an identity is formed. However, there remains a fundamental intertwining with others in which there is an originary sameness as persons, represented by personhood. It could be said that without this interrelation, it would not be possible for identity to be positively recognised, as it is this interrelation which enables reciprocity through reversibility. Through reciprocity, the perspective of another can be recognised and they can be considered worthy of an ethical relation (Johnson, 2008) and thus responded to, 'as another *self*, or *person*' (Hass, 2008: 35-36, italics in original).

Although it is argued that Merleau-Ponty did not acknowledge the ethics of reciprocity (Johnson, 2008), it is considered to be the, 'condition that is the very possibility of ethics' (*ibid*.: 169). This is reflected in Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2009: 413) description of reciprocity:

> We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field, not I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity.

Conversely, objectifying the other, which was discussed in relation to the metaphor of meat and the male gaze, is described by Merleau-Ponty (1964a: 64) as, '[t]he only experience which brings me close to an authentic awareness of death'. Bakhtin (1984a: 69) likewise notes that, when viewed as an object, a person is, 'totally finalized in their meaning and in their value', which is likened to being, 'already quite dead' (*ibid*.; 58). Thus, to see or treat another as an object, rather than another self, is to deny their personhood. In doing so, the other is not enabled to respond and therefore they are treated as if they are dead. This metaphorical death, as described by both Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin, occurs because negative judgement is passed without coming to know the other as a self, or person, through dialogue. In this situation of the denial of another's self and personhood, they may be considered a non-person, a term which has been closely associated with social death.

2.4.4.3. Non-Person and Social Death

'Non-person' originated with Goffman's (1957, 1961/2017) essays on institutionalisation and is equated with being isolated from others and being considered, 'as good as dead' (Kalish, 1968: 251). A person becomes a socially dead non-person when they are stigmatised as being defective (Gordon, 2011: 10). However, a non-person is still considered human (Gordon, 2011: 10), and thus has the potential to return to the full status of person if they conform, unlike with the metaphors of animal, meat and dirt. Institutions aim to correct the defective identity by stripping it away in a process referred to as 'mortification' (Goffman, 1957: 49-50) and imposing a socially acceptable identity via the rigidly structured relations and routines of the total institution (see sections 2.3.1. and 2.3.3.). However, although this process is undertaken in order to reform the person, the stigma of institutionalisation can have long-lasting effects. For example, Henley (2018b: 292) has noted that an ex-prisoner is still marked as an "offender". Likewise, while the purpose of stigma is to engender compliance, for the long-term unemployed it prevents re-employment. For those who need to rely on welfare support, institutionalisation becomes difficult to escape, and being a non-person may become a permanent status.

In the Kralova (2018: 4) model of social death, non-person is subsumed under the category of ‘loss of social identity’, whereas employment is considered to be a ‘role’ in the category of ‘loss of social connectedness’. Kralova argues that loss of only one role, such as employment, does not amount to social death. However, Kralova’s other key examples used to support this argument, including loss of the parenthood role through the death of a child and loss of employment through retirement, are arguably role losses which are socially acceptable and thereby not subject to blame and stigma as long-term unemployment is. Splitter (2015, 2017) has argued that identity is often confused with personhood. This originates in the belief that without certain cognitive abilities such as memory, language and rationality there is neither identity nor personhood, and thus certain lives are considered not worth living; a notion which Oyebode and Oyebode (2018: 109) note is morally repugnant. Kitwood and Bredin’s (1992) research challenged such assumptions, noting that personhood is bestowed through the care and respect of others rather than being an innate property. Therefore, it could be considered that loss of personhood, or being defined as a non-person, needs to be considered as a separate category in the Kralova (2018) model, because they do not necessarily occur together. However, as employment is such a central identity, unemployment may lead in some cases to both loss of social identity and personhood.

Regarding loss of social connectedness, it is typically characterised by lack of effective dialogue rather than loss of role. For example, within institutions social distance is formally prescribed, with ‘talk across the boundaries’ (Goffman, 1961/2017: 7), or dialogue between those who represent the institution and those who are institutionalised, being strictly controlled and formalised. This is not incidental but is used as a tool to ensure conformance by preventing any forms of dialogue that might enable someone with a devalued identity to be recognised as a person. In summary, considering how reciprocity through dialogue is repressed in institutional settings strengthens the notion of the loss of social connectedness associated with social death. This is explored via three processes which restrict dialogue with wider society and also draw upon the death metaphor: ostracism, liminality and purgatory.

2.4.4.4. Silencing to Death

Frank (2005: 968), referring to Bakhtin's (1984a: 69) notion of finalisation of identity as death, notes that, '[d]ialogue is life' and thus, 'to be outside of dialogue is *death*' (ibid., italics in original). Dialogue is central to social relations, and, as outlined above, others are relied upon to affirm identity and personhood. The absence of dialogue can be socially enforced in cases where an individual is seen to have broken social norms, commonly referred to as ostracism. For example, those whose circumstances or behaviour is non-compliant with capitalist norms may be ostracised (Redman, 2020). Ostracism is a form of social sanction used as a, 'technique of correction' (Foucault, 1975/1991: 129). The ceasing of communication inherent in ostracism has been linked to the metaphor of death. Hales (2018: 367) cites that in some cultures, to ignore someone is to metaphorically kill or, 'silence to death'. This indicates that those who are ostracised will not be heard or allowed to speak. As such, ostracism is seen to be used for three purposes: to protect groups from outsiders, to correct the behaviours of existing group members, and to permanently eject group members who resist correction (Hales, Ren & Williams, 2017; Hales, 2018). Ostracism is effective in prompting people to question and change their behaviour because it severs the sense of self and meaning drawn from belongingness (Stillman & Baumeister, 2009), thereby inducing feelings of meaninglessness (Steele, Kidd & Castano, 2015; Hales, 2018). Thus, by framing unemployed people as not belonging to society, they are encouraged to consider their life as empty and meaningless without employment (see sections 2.2.3., 2.2.4. and 2.3.4.), with ostracism being a means of cutting off unemployed people from social relations until they comply by regaining employment.

From this perspective, employment is so central to social identity, that, without employment, unemployed people lack a recognized, compliant, social identity. This is reflected in the idea that unemployed people are liminal beings who are, 'betwixt and between' (Turner, 1967: 93) social roles or identities. This occurs in highly structured societies such that when someone does not adopt a recognised social role, they are considered to be structurally dead (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016). This is reflected in the difficulty of placing unemployed people within structural social class models (see section 2.2.3.). The anthropological

origins of liminality involve rituals to symbolize the death of the old, past identity from which the liminar (*ibid*.) would emerge to take up their new future identity. The enforced loss of the old identity induces feelings of 'doubt, uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety' (*ibid.*: 50), which, while traumatising, are seen to motivate the individual to control their emotions and end the liminal period (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014). Thereby, liminality is traditionally a state of transition between two roles which, for unemployed people, is leaving one role and then becoming re-employed in another. The period of liminality continues until this occurs. Thereby, if re-employment does not occur, they remain socially and physically marginalised. While this means they are considered to, '*have* nothing' (Turner, 1967: 98) they may also be unburdened of some of the responsibilities that come with recognised roles (*ibid*.: 101). While they do not converse with wider society, liminal people are free to develop relations with each other. During this period liminars are, 'ground down to be fashioned anew' (*ibid*.). This process may be unpleasant and descriptively not only relates to the following metaphor of dirt, but also to liminality as a form of metaphorical purgatory experienced by unemployed jobseekers.

2.4.4.5. Unemployment as Purgatory

Purgatory is a theological concept which sees those who have acted sinfully but may be redeemable, subjected to a series of trials before they may enter heaven. Drawing upon this as a metaphor for unemployment, Boland and Griffin (2018: 99) note that activation (see section 2.3.1.), 'reflects purgatorial conceptions', whereby suffering is purposeful in order to arrive successfully in the, 'heaven of work' (*ibid*.: 96). The metaphor of purgatory emphasises the moral judgement exercised against unemployed people (Griffin, Boland, Tuite & Hennessy, 2020: 186), with suffering during the period of purgatory seen to be both a punishment and a way to expunge economic sins (*ibid*.: 183). That defying neo-liberal requirements is considered to be an immoral sin aligns with the dual presentation of neo-liberalism as a moral code, as noted by Mirowski (2009: 440). The series of trials that jobseekers are required to go through may be considered to include unwaged work framed as work experience, being required to apply for all and any jobs, and enduring poverty induced through sanctions. As such, the metaphorical period of purgatory can also worsen the affect unemployment has on the physical body, including declining health and

increased chance of physical death. Existing literature has found some bodily impacts of unemployment to be hunger (Wright & Patrick, 2019), fatigue (Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcazar, 2019) and suicide (Mills, 2018). This aligns with Kralova's (2018) third and final criteria for social death: losses associated with disintegration of the body.

2.4.4.6. Disintegration of the Body

Bodily disintegration may compound the feeling of social death, yet jobseekers are required to psychologically overcome these affects and act as if they are not occurring. Therefore, purgatory aligns with the notion that death is not necessarily the moment that the individual escapes power, as Foucault (2003: 248 in Taylor, 2013; 49) outlined, but that the commodifying power of capitalism can reach beyond death. Thus, unemployed people, particularly those living in poverty, become like a, 'living corpse' (Greenwood, 1933/1993: 170). Although it is neo-liberal capitalist imperatives that "kill" and "deaden" unemployed people, it is the same requirements that attempt to reanimate their "corpses". This is reflected in the metaphorical parody used by one of the informants in this study, who referred to their case workers as 'Burke and Hare' (FN 293-295, FN 536). William Burke and William Hare, motivated by the profits to be made in the "bodysnatching industry" in 1828, murdered and sold their victims' corpses for dissection (McCracken-Flesher, 2012; 7, 10). In life, their victims were considered to be from the 'underclass' (*ibid*.), or 'dangerous class' (Rosner, 2010; 127), and therefore defined as more useful in death. These corpses are inert and objectified non-persons and merely a commodity to be traded for profit. A metaphorical corpse, like a metaphorical animal, thereby has the potential to either return to society by becoming objectified and reanimated under capitalist conditions or it may remain outside the social structure.

2.4.4.7. Social Death Summary

The notion of social death, reflected not only in the metaphor of corpses but also animals and meat, is not necessarily an event, as physical death is typically considered to be, but a process. This process has the potential for one of two outcomes: either the individual subjected to social death conforms and returns to the social order, or they do not conform and remain suspended

outside the social order. As has been outlined, one of the central tools of social death is to cease dialogue with the socially dead. This does not mean that the "dead" are not communicated with at all, but that their previous identity is stripped away and a new one imposed without their active involvement or recognising their ability to speak against this. This is supported by nonreciprocity as the choice not to recognise those considered to be socially dead as worthy of an ethical relation. Without reciprocity, there is no ability to see from the perspective of unemployed lived experience, nor to have empathy with their situation. However, as the above analysis has demonstrated, the socially dead are not necessarily completely cut off from social relations and may have contact with other people who are also socially dead, as is reflected in the similar concept of liminality. Thus, the dualism of living/dead, and even the pronouncement of social death cannot be strictly delineated (Kellahear, 2008). Thereby, Kralova's (2018) critique of the concept of social death as being too broadly applied, and thus creating ambiguity, may apply to theoretical applications, but with regards to experience, social death must be ambiguous to support meaning making through enabling metaphorical expression.

The following section considers the final metaphor of dirt, which is a broader category encompassing the specific form of 'scum' mentioned by the informant in this research. While dirt is also related to both death and hierarchy, there is less focus on reforming or recycling dirt to enable it to return to the social order. Thereby, dirt can be viewed as the final stage in which those who do not fit into the existing social structure are deemed as requiring removal and destruction.

2.4.5. Metaphor: Unemployed people as Dirt

The specific metaphor used by one of the informants when describing how they believe others see them was, 'scum'. Physically, this is defined as, 'impurities…formed on the surface of a liquid…' (Merriam-Webster, 2020). It is also commonly used metaphorically in the sense that it is synonymous with defining, 'a low, vile, or worthless person or group of people', such as the proletariat or rabble (*ibid*.). Dirt, and the related notion of scum, represent a threat to social organisation, because dirt cannot be classified and therefore has no formal place (Douglas, 1984: 2). What is considered to be dirt is that which is rejected by hierarchy and order and is thereby considered dangerous

in its potential to upset that order (*ibid*.: 4, 35). This is reflected in the difficulty in classifying unemployed people within structural social class models. Dirt and scum and its dangerous potential have also been used to describe groups perceived to be outside, or at the bottom of, society. For example, Marx's notion of the lumpenproletariat (see section 2.2.3.) was labelled the, 'dangerous class' (Welshman, 2013; 3), and the bottom three categories of the Great British Class Survey have been referred to as, 'undeserving scum', 'freakshow scum' and 'expendable' (comedian quoted in Dorling, 2014: 457).

However, certain groups are not just viewed as dirt by capitalism, but "dirt" is itself a capitalistic by-product. Unemployment is the 'human waste' (Bauman, 2004; 6) left behind by the movement of industry. The unemployed, conceived as a homogenous group, are considered to be waste not only because they have been used by capital and are no longer producing capitalist value, but also because they are seen to waste that which valuable to capital: time. Waste is sorted according to its potential future value, or in other words it is hierarchised, as is reflected in the stratification of the reserve army of labour and "creaming and parking" (see section 2.3.1.). The cheapest route is used to get rid of dirt, meaning that if waste recycling, or with regards to the unemployed, recommodification, is too expensive, then, waste is merely disposed of. The first stage of this could be considered to be a form of suspension that would align with a liminal existence which involves keeping the "dirt" together in a place which is away from mainstream society. Douglas (1984: 160) defined the true place of dirt to be, 'a rubbish heap of one kind or another.' Spatially this is reflected through a marginalised community such as where the men in this study lived (see section 1.4.1.). Goffman's (1961/2017: 74) notion of institutions functioning as, 'storage dumps' is also a relevant metaphor for those "parked" within the Jobcentre system as they receive little support or investment. As a mass with no individual identity, dirt may be treated according to that which befits its status, which Douglas (*ibid*.) defined as being, 'pulverised, dissolved and rotted away'. However, it is not acknowledged that there is a section of the unemployed who are unwanted by capitalism, because they lack the relevant skills and experience, as well as having insufficient material resources, and are therefore are unlikely to re-gain employment. Instead, unemployed people in this position must remain a jobseeker in line

with their welfare contract, leaving them in what is likely to be a permanent state of social death. However, that this status and its requirements may be permanent does not mean that these “unwanted” unemployed people are merely continually compliant in their own repression. The following final section explores how some of the experiences of these unemployed people, such as the men in this study, are representative of the fundamentally resistive nature of the body.

2.5. The Heteroglossia of Unemployment

Each of the metaphors of animals, meat, death and dirt allude to how unemployed people are seen to lack identity within capitalist society. These framings are both a punishment for non-compliance and a means by which to discipline and enforce compliance by defining the unemployed as a potentially resistive group. However, resistance is not necessarily collective and large-scale, as it is traditionally conceived. The literature discussed so far has largely concentrated on the notion of the body as a target of power. However, Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 75) also defined the body as fundamentally resistive as it cannot be brought fully under the control of consciousness. As was outlined in the introduction to this chapter, while the monoglossia of unemployment presents itself as the single and rational perspective, there are always opposing voices, or in Bakhtin’s (1981: 272) term, a heteroglossia. This section recognises different lived experience as the source of these opposing voices which, via an alternative conception of the self as part of the flesh, burst through in carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour.

2.5.1. Resistance from Within

When people are objectified as an “Other” and externally defined, they are seen as fully determined, and thus resistance is obscured. Resistance can thus be overlooked from the perspective of capitalism because when workers are reduced to commodities, they are defined as incapable of resistance. This relies on a dualistic conception of compliance and resistance in that for resistance to be recognised it must align with complete incompliance. Heyes (2013: 167), for example, noted that mainstream conceptions of resistance understand it as a need to be, ‘outside the system of power…to push back against it.’ In which case, resistance would represent freedom from that which

is resisted. Conversely, Foucault (1975/1991: 194) defined power as fundamentally relational, meaning it is not only one-sided. If resistance were not present then suppression would not be necessary, and thereby resistance is also an expression of power. Likewise, resistance would be unnecessary if it came from a position of freedom from power. Instead, freedom is transgressive in that it must be continually, 'wrested from the games of power' (Mendieta, 2013: 123). This is clearly demonstrated in gender research, with Connell (1987/2003: 184) identifying that, 'compliance, resistance and co-operation' occur in combination, and King (1997) noting that compliance and resistance are simultaneous and inseparable. Thus, resistance is continually present, although not in the form that might be expected.

Resistance is typically identified as large-scale and collective, such that Peterie et al. (2019: 4) noted the expectation that resistance consists of 'open acts of defiance'. This is considered to be the most effective way to press for change, especially for the disadvantaged, who lack other forms of access to institutional power and therefore have the most to gain from such action (Dixon, Durrheim, Stevenson & Cakal, 2016). However, this form of resistance may be more straightforward for institutions to prevent and repress, such as through individualisation. Foucault (1975/1991: 201) noted how, within institutions, '[t]he crowd…a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities' which prevents coalitions, disorder and plots. In other words, separating individuals prevents anything which may upset the smooth running of the institution and the discharge of its purpose. This is supported not only by the arrangement of boundaries within space, but also socially. For example, the control of dialogue supports mutual distrust (Goffman, 1961/2017: 7) and thereby reinforces the imposed boundaries and hierarchy from both sides. Within such a context any small act of individual resistance can be framed as being hardly worth recognising, or even that it is occasionally allowable within a wider context of compliance in order to prevent large-scale resistance (see section 2.5.7.). This again risks the notion that, in order to be effective, resistance must be outside that which is a resisted. These difficulties in conceiving resistance within power are addressed via the notions of ontological difference reflected in both Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin.

2.5.2. History from Below

Although the body is seen by capitalism as an object and the target of power, it is also the source of resistance. It can be considered in the nature of the body to be resistant, such that Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 75) described how the body, 'will not tolerate any commands, not even those which I would like to give to myself.' For example, Summa (2012: 29) notes how the resistance of the body is experienced when, 'I am tired or sick, when I try to hold my breath longer than I can, or when I am ashamed and seek in vain to control the redness of my cheeks.' Thereby the body cannot only be a controlled thing, an oppressed thing or a determined thing. The body also resists, transgresses and creates. These characteristics exist together continually, neither as a dualism, nor as a dialectical synthesis which is resolved in a single perspective. Merleau-Ponty's thesis of reversibility, or chiasm, recognises this presence of difference in the same, and likewise Bakhtin's dialogic recognises that difference cannot be reduced to the same. Wegerif (2006) refers to both of these as theories of ontological difference.

This difference is present in lived experience, which is experienced by the body and then expressed through gesture and speech. The monoglossia of unemployment (see section 2.2.), represents the "official" perspective which has its own accepted sedimented language. This requires a perspective on history that demonstrates the need for, and inevitability of, capitalism so that its current dominance is legitimated as rational and natural progression. As Merleau-Ponty (1973: 87) noted, 'It is in our present that true history gets the force to refer everything else to the present.' Most simply, history is written backwards and histories which are broadly accepted are those written by people in recognised positions of power, rather than those considered subordinate. Thus, as a reflective act of rational consciousness, history becomes abstract, spurning the different lived experiences of those who were there. This is because lived experience is pre-reflective, being simply defined as, 'life as we live it' (van Manen, 2014: 39). This lived experience tends to be that of subordinate people: those who do not necessarily benefit from the current order or its development. At the level of lived experience, the history of, 'ordinary people living out their lives' (Harnett, 2010: 162) is considered to be, 'history from below' (Featherstone & Griffin, 2016: 375) the presence of which

is an inherent challenge to accepted history. Neo-liberal capitalism benefits from such histories being forgotten, repressed or discredited because they do not support its principles of progress. Nevertheless, despite repression, these experiences have been lived through and thus remain present in individual bodies as the “other side” of history.

2.5.3. The Other Side

If the past is discarded, as capitalism requires, then difference is erased. This is reflected in the concept of the rational self which thereby is not limited by any attachment to prior experience. However, the embodied perspective demonstrates that it is these very prior experiences that form the world for the individual and their engagement with it. As outlined in section 2.4.1., a person forms a particular attachment to the world through lived experience which shapes the meaning that world has to them and how they engage with it. This lived experience is held as, ‘information in the body’ (Pylvanainen, 2012: 305). Knowledge is thereby not only contained in the mind but is developed in different parts of the body through experience and practice. As Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009: 160) noted, ‘[c]onsciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'.’ This bodily ‘I can’ means that certain paths feel open to a person based on their experience and other paths feel closed. This is also reflected in Foucault’s notion of power, with Feder (2013; 56) noting that the original French, *pouvoir,* needs to be understood not just as the noun “power” but as the verb, “to be able to”. Thereby, limits are not placed on the body by thought, nor can any perceived limits be overcome by thought. It is instead lived experience which supports resistance.

Certain experiences and ways of being in the world are suppressed because they do not align with the official requirements of capitalist history and the rational self. Bakhtin (1984b: 272) referred to these as the “other side”, defined as, ‘the side that was hidden, that nobody talked about, that did not fit the words and forms of prevailing philosophy.’ It could also be considered to be part of what Merleau-Ponty termed the *invisible*, interpreted by Morris (2018: 14) as that which is not, ‘already and determinately given.’ The invisible is an unseen part of the visible which emerges in expression. This means that a single meaning cannot be imposed on the world, as different perceptions will

always be present. However, because of the resistant nature of the body, this other, hidden side is periodically exposed. Merleau-Ponty's notion of the self was as a dehiscence: an interiority that bursts into the world (Vasseleu, 1998: 30). For example, Gordon (2011) describes the expression of past social violence and trauma in the present as "haunting" because it represents

> when things are not in their assigned places, when the cracks and the rigging are exposed, when the people who are meant to be invisible show up without any sign of leaving, when disturbed feelings won't go away, when easily living one day and then the next becomes impossible, when the present seamlessly becoming "the future" gets entirely jammed up (*ibid*.: 3)

Haunting is thus one way of describing the expression of something which does not align with the official perspective and reflects that those who are considered socially dead retain a physical presence that haunts the "living" by reminding them of a past that was supposedly erased. Thus, expression continually opposes and pulls away from the official monoglossia. As speech contains elements of both official interpretations and creative expressions, it is filled with contradiction and ambiguity. Bakhtin (1981: 273) referred to this tension which opposes monoglossia as 'dialogized heteroglossia', which Kirmayer (2000: 157) described as, 'an intercutting of many voices'. In other words, heteroglossia is the voices of other perspectives interrupting, undermining and pulling apart monoglossia. This can be very subtle, and almost undetected, such as using monologic words and expressions for other purposes. This bursting through of creative expression under conditions which try to suppress it is reflected in the notion of everyday resistance.

2.5.4. Everyday Resistance

Peterie et al. (2019) argued that jobseeker resistance has received less attention than analyses using Foucault's governmentality theory due to the tendency to focus on overt resistance. They instead highlight the importance of recognising everyday resistance, based on the theory of Scott (1985) which focuses on the small acts of informal and covert resistance. For example, Scott (1985: 40-41) identifies the undermining of official terms via the substitution of a cynical and mocking expression, such that conformity becomes calculated. Where verbal expressions are made, they may use official or unofficial language. Unofficial language is seen to be reflected particularly in male speech, such as curses and indecencies, as well as the use of colloquial

words. Speech can be disguised as overt resistance because speech has a dual aspect, such that praise and abuse can be present in the same expression (Bakhtin, 1984a: 168). This can be conceived as a metaphorical battle between two perspective using words and other expressions as weapons. Thereby, Scambler (2018) noted that stigma has been weaponised as violence against those rejected by the norms of neo-liberal society, this can be combatted by everyday resistance, which appropriates official speech as a weapon (Scott, 1985: 29).

Such resistance is considered to be particularly appropriate for those who are marginalised because open resistance is likely only to worsen the inferior and oppressive conditions of the disadvantaged (*ibid*.: 36). Everyday resistance works mainly to make the immediate situation of those who are resisting more bearable. However, although the acts in themselves are insignificant, they may still be able to cause difficulties and undermine the people or systems they are directed towards. For example, those delivering jobseeker services to the long-term unemployed have reported a need to overcome, 'protective resistance' (Beck, 2018: 11) consisting of bravado and hiding perceived problems and mistakes. Such strategies may be resorted to as previous more overt resistance has not resulted in the individual's objectives being realised. Wilkinson and Ortega-Alcazar (2019) identified this as a slow and passive conformity and emotional detachment from capitalist goals such as making progress. Mills (2018) also proposed suicide as an alternative form of jobseeker resistance, although it is not typically seen as such. While effective collective resistance against welfare policy is not unknown, such as action by Boycott Workfare leading to the withdrawal of some employer support for the scheme (Greer, 2016), it does not necessarily affect the broader approach to governing unemployment. Thereby resistance may be largely creative expression within the imposed boundaries.

2.5.5. Death Giving Birth

While social death means that personhood, self and identity is denied by wider capitalist society, other forms of relation and subjectivity may be created and recognised through resistance. Thereby, social death is not necessarily total, even without meeting the conditions it imposes, and instead can be viewed as

containing the potential to develop new and different relations. This is reflected in Bakhtin's (1984b: 53) conception of death as pregnant and giving birth. Death, as the "other side" of birth, is seen as necessary to enable, 'the people's growth and renewal' (*ibid*.: 407). Metaphorical death is only permanent if it is taken seriously, if it is believed it is deserved, and the self is objectified by the self. As Merleau-Ponty (1964a; 68) notes:

> The only experience which brings me close to an authentic awareness of death is the experience of contact with another, since under his gaze I am only an object just as he is merely a piece of the world under my own…But I do not feel threatened by the presence of another unless I remain unaware of my subjectivity at the very moment his gaze is reducing me to an object

Thereby, social death can be escaped by creating other forms of non-capitalistic value and meaning which allow the self to be recognised as a self. In Bakhtin's analysis of Rabelais, it is grotesque and carnivalesque laughter which enables the official world, that which objectifies and finalises meaning, to be destroyed. This represents, 'an escape from the usual way of life' (Bakhtin, 1984b: 8) which consists of official, authoritarian seriousness, fear, lies and violence, and creates, 'another way of life' (*ibid*.: 48) in which fear and lies are defeated (*ibid*.: 90-91).

In the grotesque and carnivalesque, that which is official is thrown down, tried on, and made fun of. There is thus a downward, violent movement (*ibid*.: 371). However, this is not the same form of violence as that enacted by the state. It is the authentic version of life experience, consisting only of that which is expressed externally and in public, as dialogue and action under the principle of, 'free and familiar contact' (Bakhtin, 1981: 240; Bakhtin, 1984b: 10). An example of this is given by Bakhtin (1984b: 16) in describing the contact, creativity and use of unofficial speech between those who are on friendly terms:

> when two persons establish friendly relations, the form of their verbal intercourse also changes abruptly; they address each other informally, abusive words are used affectionately, and mutual mockery is permitted. (In formal intercourse only a third person can be mocked.) The two friends may pat each other on the shoulder and even on the belly (a typical carnivalesque gesture). Verbal etiquette and discipline are relaxed and indecent words and expressions may be used.

This suggests that speech is more creative between those who know each other well and who recognise the other as a self rather than an object, allowing a true dialogue rather than speech which attempts to finalise the other. The self is unfinalisable in dialogue because it always retains the possibility of finalising itself. This movement in which all that is official is brought down is the, 'principle of grotesque realism' (Bakhtin, 1984b: 20) in which carnivalesque laughter is able to turn the, 'subject into flesh' (*ibid*.). This enables the official to be degraded and brought down to the material level of the people. Thus, the hierarchy is temporarily switched, enabling the people to take the place of that which is normally above them in the hierarchy, while simultaneously the official is forced into their place at the bottom. As such, the current, official, world is momentarily destroyed.

2.5.6. Upside Down and Inside Out

The switching of place and general downward movement which is representative of the grotesque and carnivalesque involves not only the reversal of roles, such as the jester being proclaimed king (Bakhtin, 1984b: 81), but the switching of the formal use of all things, such as, 'putting clothes on inside out (or wrong side out), trousers on the head, dishes in place of headgear, the use of household utensils as weapons, and so forth.' (Bakhtin, 1981: 126). These actions upset all that is considered finalised and stable, including the existing hierarchy. The downward motion is also fundamentally associated with the positive nature of the lower bodily stratum, represented by the belly, including food and wine, genitals and other lower parts of the body. Thereby, while the rational self is individualised and represents a dualistic separation of mind and body, grotesque realism is closely aligned to the bodily, material aspects of the world. Grotesque realism is characterised by universal bodily experiences like eating, drinking, defecating, dying and procreation. Of these, Bakhtin (1984b: 281) notes that, '[e]ating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque' as it is the representation of the body's ability to transgress its boundaries, in which, 'man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself.' (*ibid*.). This can be linked to the metaphor of meat (see section 2.4.3.2.), the negative affect of which could be reversed through carnivalesque eating and drinking. It is also fundamentally connected to death via the funeral banquet which emphasised the potential for

a new beginning (*ibid*.: 283) and allowed a crisis to be overcome through ritual 'funeral laughter' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 127). Thus, the grotesque enables the official to be considered in material terms, and high ideals are broken down and demeaned as they are tried on and thus ridiculed.

One of the principal ways in which high is brought low is through parody. Parody is ambivalent and represents the 'world turned inside out', being that it does not reject that which is parodied but distorts it (*ibid*.). Boland (2012: 443) has suggested that parody can be an, 'emancipatory, critical unmasking' by revealing a disguised truth. This truth originates from lived experience, but speaks in the official, monologic voice, introducing a completely opposed meaning, and appropriating that discourse for a different purpose. This reforms the discourse as, 'an arena of battle between two voices' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 193). Parody is thus a form of freedom in which, as Bakhtin (1981: 61) notes:

> Language is transformed from the absolute dogma it had been within the narrow framework of a sealed-off and impermeable monoglossia into a working hypothesis for comprehending and expressing reality.

Thus, it can be seen how parody challenges the singular perspective of monoglossia. As such, parody provides an occasion in which unemployed people, such as the men in this study, can defy the monoglossia of unemployment by using its own language in an absurd way. The laughter generated via this process enables the official to be brought down from its high and remote position so that it can be freely explored by people on their own terms. Bakhtin (1981: 23) describes this process as follows:

> Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look at its center [sic], doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it.

As noted, the crucial purpose of these actions: carnivalesque laughter, grotesque eating and drinking, downwards movements and creative violence, and parody, is to dispel the fear that the official represents when it is faced on its own terms. The turning upside down or inside out, in which the "other side" is exposed, represents triumph and advantage over the world and fear. This can involve parodic or symbolic destruction of that which generates fear, such

as Bakthin's (1984b: 91) example of the grotesque burning of a depiction of hell. Fear is a bodily emotion and if it is defeated then the purpose of inducing fear is nullified and its power as an official tool evaporates. Thus, although the unemployed "underclass" are framed as being at the bottom of, or outside formal capitalist society, and socially dead, they are able to ridicule this notion by tearing down the hierarchy, switching their position with case workers and other official representatives, speaking in unofficial voices and also appropriating official speech for their own means, and thereby collectively taking back power and freedom.

2.5.7. Laughter of all the People

The opportunity to challenge given capitalist meaning and create a new shared alternative meaning is not something which can be undertaken individually. Bakhtin (1984b: 8) is clear that the carnival atmosphere is experienced, and participated in, by, 'all the people', noting that this is difficult to understand from a modern perspective, where humour and laughter consist of precisely what the carnivalesque is not, 'an individual reaction to some isolated "comic" event' (*ibid*.: 12, 18). Interpreting laughter according to this modern perspective means it is dismissed as ineffective. For example, Kersten (2018: 171), in analysing the appeal of Mark Twain's popular quote, 'against the assault of laughter nothing can stand', argues on the basis of empirical evidence that laughter is not a corrective force in any society. Kersten (2018: 177) asserts that if laughter had the power that was claimed, Trump would not have been elected President due to him being subjected to laughing, 'satirical attacks' and political satire. However, Bakhtin (1984b; 62) refers to satire as a disintegration of the carnivalesque style. It does not have the same power because it waters down it's universalism (*ibid*.). Likewise, Boukes, Boomgaarden, Moorman & Vreese (2015) note that satire is individualised because its interpretation is thought to differ based on individual experience. Individual laughter cannot be equated with the carnivalesque, and therefore cannot be assessed as having the same power.

Another reason why the carnivalesque is dismissed as ineffective is that it is considered to be mere foolishness, and something that is enabled by the existing social order in order to prevent more damaging resistance. For

example, Kersten (2018: 179) concludes that humour can't bring about social and political change without being supported by, 'good ideas, convincing arguments, intelligent debate'. The carnivalesque has been referred to as merely a, 'safety valve' (Grindon, 2004: 151); a type of resistance permitted by capitalism as an outlet for the frustrations of the lower classes, preventing the overthrow that could be caused should these frustrations be strictly repressed, only to burst out into revolution. This originates from a quote in Bakhtin (1984b; 75) which states that, 'Wine barrels burst if from time to time we do not open them and let in some air.' However, a closer reading of Bakhtin (*ibid.*) identifies that this quote is a theological argument made in 1444 which allowed carnivalesque ritual feasts by framing them as just foolishness. This delegitimises its potential as resistance from the official perspective, as if it is officially sanctioned, it cannot truly be resistance. A similar perspective is reflected in the tendency to assess laughter on capitalistic terms and in a way which benefits capitalism.

Alternatively, Bruns (2000: 5) notes that laughter is, 'free from the terms and conditions of power.' Although tearing down the official hierarchy through carnivalesque laughter and humour is viewed as only temporary, the complete overthrow of the existing order may not be desired nor beneficial. Instead, the function of laughter as an everyday resistance is to challenge the very meaning and efficacy of official power. Westwood and Johnson (2011: 802) proposed that, 'humour's subversive and resistive potential resides in its capacity to intrude alternate meanings into social situations.' Their research demonstrates how employees resist the requirement to adopt imposed identities or perform behaviours which feel inauthentic. A similar notion is reflected in analyses using Bakhtin's carnivalesque in schools. Psycher and Lozenski (2014: 531) interpret what would normally be referred to as 'disordered' behaviour in young people as carnivalesque, utilised as a means for them to resist cultural homogenisation. Tam (2010) has noted that when the traditional restrictions of Chinese education were removed, carnivalesque laughter, movement and, 'imaginative violence' (*ibid*.: 179) emerged. Thus, the carnivalesque allows, and even necessitates, alternative interpretations of power and resistance.

It also represents an alternative interpretation of laughter. There is a general assumption that some things are too serious to be laughed at (Bruns, 2000), and therefore, if things are bad, then laughter is not appropriate. This leads to the conclusion that those who laugh cannot truly be suffering. However, as Weimann, Knabe and Schob (2015; 138-139) note:

> People can still develop good feelings even under extremely bad conditions, but these good feelings can't be a justification for the bad conditions.

Laughter is able to materialise the ideological and psychological, enabling it to be explored and challenged on different terms, and thereby lessen negative feelings of discontent, despair, and fear. It is able to do so because it is not considered to be a threat to official power. Due to the collective nature of carnivalesque laughter it also is a something which can clearly affect others. Curran, McKeown, Rychlowska and Andre et al. (2018: 2) noted that laughter has the ability to, 'facilitate social cohesion'. This in itself is a resistance of neo-liberal individualism and a challenge to its practices of ostracism and social death. By affecting others, laughter confirms that the socially dead are physically alive and develops collective relations that support sensemaking. The notion that laughter is only effective as a form of resistance if it demonstrates a permanent impact on official monologism is representative of dialectical, rather than dialogical thinking. Bakhtin (1984a: 95) noted that the monologic world requires, 'a *merging* of voices and truths in a single *impersonal* truth' (*ibid*., italics in original). Instead, carnivalesque laughter is the interjection of an opposing truth, which nevertheless is always present and emerges periodically. To consider laughter ineffective because it does not change the monologic perspective or become subsumed within it, or overthrow it in revolution, is to misunderstand its purpose and power. The reversibility that is inherent in carnivalesque laughter is fundamental to the recognition of the personhood of the men in this study, their material circumstances, and provides the potential to develop a reciprocal, more ethical relation with other unemployed people.

2.5.8. Affect, Reversibility and Reciprocity

There is a significant difference between the two forms of reciprocity which have been outlined in this chapter. The first, contractual reciprocity (see section 2.3.2.), means that each side of the welfare contract needs to be fulfilled for it

to be reciprocal. The second is reciprocity rooted in Merleau-Ponty's notion of reversibility in which another person can also be recognised as another self, and thus enter into an ethical relation, rather than one objectifying the other (see section 2.4.4.). As welfare contracts are inherently unequal for the disadvantaged unemployed, it can be seen that the first form of reciprocity is actually its refusal. Milbank (2001: 485) referred to such refusals of reciprocity as being explicitly related to capitalist economics. The condition of reversibility means that the potential to see from another's perspective is always possible. However, Johnson (2008: 170) noted that there are situations which illuminate, and others which deaden, this condition. Illumination occurs through effective dialogue, in which the perspective of the other is recognised. Deadening occurs when the other is objectified, finalised and denied personhood. In particular, the requirement of the rational self means the notion of sharing someone else's experience is viewed as problematic. Additionally, the lack of relationship between Jobcentre Plus workers and benefit claimants also limits the potential for effective dialogue, meaning that, 'no reciprocity is possible' (Boland, 2015b: 164). Thus, the ethical recognition of difference via reciprocity cannot be achieved when the fundamental sameness of the other as a person via reversibility is denied.

However, when the self is understood as a bodily dehiscence which bursts into the world, it becomes possible to understand the fundamental connection which enables the possibility to see from another's perspective. There are three ways in which the eruption of carnivalesque laughter supports the condition of reversibility and, via this, reciprocity. First, it is a way to assert power by re-creating the world that has been destroyed by the trauma of unemployment (see section 2.4.1.). Through the spontaneous insertion of alternative meaning the carnivalesque enables its participants to recapture a firm grasp on their world, which is normally considered to be invisible (see section 2.5.3.). This asserts the power of, 'I can' whereby that which would normally be forbidden is made possible, thereby providing freedom and liberation from constraints of the existing social order and its associated norms and identities. Specifically, this is represented by the enforced reversal of hierarchy in which the high is torn down and the low is exalted. Second, the carnivalesque is a means by which a collective atmosphere is created which defies the individualising principle

reflected in the rational self and welfare state institutional practices, such as in the Jobcentre. Carnivalesque laughter can only enable power and freedom if everyone participates. This is not just intersubjective, which is a psychological interaction (Dolezal, 2017), but intercorporeal, as a common and connected embodied nature. This is reflected not only in Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh of the world, but the bodily principle of the carnivalesque, defined by Bakhtin (1984b: 26-27) as:

> The unfinished and open body (dying, bringing forth and being born) is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals, with objects. It is cosmic, it represents the entire material bodily world in all its elements. It is an incarnation of this world at the absolute lower stratum, as the swallowing up and generating principle, as the bodily grave and bosom, as a field which has been sown and in which new shoots are preparing to sprout.

Thus, although the socially dead are cut off from capitalist social relations by being placed at the bottom of, or outside, the social hierarchy, as well as being subjected to disciplinary tools that silence and punish, the carnivalesque enables this death to be one that "gives birth", in which they are freed from the monoglossia of unemployment through interaction and dialogue with other selves.

Finally, and relatedly, the carnivalesque is a way to feel that the self exists and is affirmed when it is denied by capitalist relations. This is through bodily affect in which people are not only affected, but also have the ability to affect. Merleau-Ponty has been referred to as the fore-father of affect theory, with an affect being defined as, 'something that moves, that triggers reactions, forces or intensities.' (Berberich, Campbell & Hudson, 2013). Affect is thereby a bodily, emotional reaction representing the ability to feel something through being affected by it. The grotesque, and laughter in its carnivalesque form, are a shared bodily affect through triggering a reaction in others, by making them laugh. If creative violence is involved there is also a direct bodily affect. Affects can be both positive and negative. The affect of welfare policy on individuals, such as enacted through Jobcentre Plus, when they feel treated as animals, meat, corpses and dirt, is one-sided, further objectifying unemployed people through an inability to respond. This is the objectifying gaze of power (see sections 2.4.4.2. and 2.5.5.). However, this power of another to complete the self can also have a positive aspect. Bakhtin refers to this as the ability to bestow qualities upon another as a, 'gift', with Sullivan (2012: 3) providing

examples that, ‘[i]f someone laughs at our joke, we may feel funny; or flirts with us, we may feel attractive’. Thereby, while the character of unemployed people who are perceived as part of the “underclass” is finalised as worthless, idle, non-compliant and therefore “dead”, the carnivalesque provides the opportunity to demonstrate they are not “dead” as they have the ability to affect the other things of the world, allowing reversibility and the potential for reciprocity to be fully illuminated.

It is only through recognising reversibility and responding in reciprocity that an ethical relation is enabled. While Johnson (2008) has noted that it is a choice to respond to others in this way, the economic, profit-making focus of capitalism, ‘promotes technical, non-ethical thinking’ (O’Brien & Griffin, 2015: 220) which makes it difficult to see beyond the perspective of the monoglossia of unemployment. Alternatively, the embodied perspective allows both sameness and difference to be recognised concurrently; sameness as the moral basis of considering all others to be persons and selves, difference in that there are other ways of living which ethically should be recognised. Thus, from the embodied perspective, as Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 75) outlined, there is an, ‘obligation to understand situations other than my own’ and also to, ‘make them equally possible in an order of truth’ (*ibid*.). This is not an equality based on reducing difference to the same, as might occur in a dialectical synthesis (see section 2.5.7.) but enabling difference while retaining the fundamental sameness of personhood. This requires a continual reciprocal dialogue, retaining what Bakhtin (1981: 160) referred to as, ‘the right to be “other” in this world’ in which a self can be affirmed even if it matches none of the, ‘existing categories’ (*ibid*.), such as the rational relation to self and the employment norm, or work-related identity (see sections 2.2.5. and 2.4.4.1.). These categories, which are used to sort and hierarchise people without employment in relation to society and as a separate population, thereby become irrelevant if reciprocity is enabled because it can be viewed as inherently unethical. When the body is foregrounded, material need, pain and suffering take precedent over economic and psychological concerns. This no doubt requires a significant shift, from blaming an individual for their unemployment, to the position outlined by Foucault (2010: 205) where the reason for unemployment does not matter, only that subsistence is required. Thereby, instead of an order in which some

must suffer in inequality in order for others to make a profit, it enables the creation of, ‘a life which is not unliveable for the greatest number.’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1964b: 131).

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter began by considering unemployment in its surface aspect; the singular monologic perspective in which unemployed people are individualised, blamed and their suffering is denied. This is a perspective underpinned by economic principles which permeate politics and society, thereby making it very difficult to see the ethical implications of assessing people’s worth largely in monetary terms. In the spirit of Foucault’s (1975/1991: 31), ‘History of the Present’ the journey through the chapter followed the creative, centrifugal, force which moves away from the centralising tendency of monoglossia to plumb the depths of lived experience. This revealed how many aspects considered to be “natural” under neo-liberal capitalism, such as inequality and the rational self, have merely been constructed to benefit the capitalist market-based profit imperative, becoming accepted and broadened over time as they are sedimented in discourse as well as everyday life. It is these two aspects: the monologic discourse, and how the quiet murmur of everyday resistance interjects with its heteroglossia of alternative voices, that this analysis has sought to illuminate. In other words, how the monoglossia of unemployment is lived and responded to in the everyday.

The ethical need to uncover this experience is that it is those who have the least resources, such as the disadvantaged unemployed, are stigmatised as the “underclass”, “undeserving unemployed” and previously, the, “bad poor” (see section 2.2.3.) are those who are least able to comply and thereby most likely to face punitive treatment through the governance of unemployment and administration of welfare. Rather than simply describing this treatment, the reader is brought closer to how these experiences really feel through the use of metaphors which align with things and events of the world that most people have encountered and therefore can relate to and more readily understand. Thus, that which is normally condemned to invisibility by capitalism, through its repression of alternative perspectives and ways of living, can be seen upon its own terms.

While this treatment condemns unemployed people, such as the men in this study, to the bottom of the social hierarchy, it was outlined how this position can be resisted through the upsurge of lived experience and history from below. However, in order to realise this, it is necessary not just to tear down this hierarchy, but to challenge its very ontological basis, represented by the rational self and dualisms such as mind/body, live/dead and compliance/resistance. From the alternative perspective of the flesh of the world, these differences are continually co-present within the same. The mind is within the body, and the potential for reversibility between the two in which one or the other is foregrounded means that neo-liberal, capitalist ideology can be materialised through the bodily representations of grotesque humour, such as eating, drinking and defecating. It is through these actions that all, at the basic level, are equal. Although it is not recognised in the contractual relations implemented by Jobcentre Plus, the material needs necessary for survival require subsistence in order to be fulfilled, even for those who are socially "dead".

While the ontological perspective has necessarily been drawn upon throughout the Literature Review, the following Methodology Chapter outlines a detailed discussion of the central concepts, specifically the flesh of the world, reversibility and reciprocity. A further connection is made between the general literature and the research methods through the influence of dialogical narrative analysis, based on the theories of Bakhtin.

3.0. Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods determined as most suitable to get close to the lived experiences of the men and to listen to their stories in order to address the research questions. As a phenomenological piece of research, the methodology is inspired by the philosopher and phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty. As Merleau-Ponty is known as, '*the* philosopher of the body and embodiment' (Hoel & Carusi, 2018: 45, emphasis added), his theories support the embodied perspective outlined in the Introduction Chapter. To foreground the body is deemed particularly appropriate for researching people who, due to their marginalisation and experiences of material deprivation, speak of their suffering in bodily terms. This perspective confronts the typically psychological view of how unemployment is constructed as a problem, and thus, how it is perceived it should be resolved. However, this critique is considered to be in the spirit of Merleau-Ponty's writings, which consistently argued against the prioritisation of the mind, or psychological experience, represented by Cartesian thought. Adopting a phenomenological attitude towards formulating the research questions, and throughout the research, supported meeting the phenomenological aim to reach, as far as is possible, "the things themselves", which in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is bodily experience prior to the intervention of consciousness, which is particularly necessary to avoid dualistic thought.

Phenomenological research methods are driven by the phenomena itself and typically utilise qualitative approaches. Both phenomenology and ethnography are considered to be an outcome that evokes lived experience, and in their production require reflection upon 'experiential material' (van Manen, 2014: 297), or materials which relate directly to experience. This material was generated via the typical ethnographic approach of the researcher establishing themselves in the field, this being an appropriate context in which the phenomenon occurs and taking extensive field notes based on observation and interaction with the research informants. Participatory visual research was also undertaken at the start of this process as it is a recognised method to build trust and rapport with marginalised people. The methods were underpinned by

Merleau-Ponty's notions of speech and art as the creative expressions of bodily experience. This was further supported through dialogical narrative analysis which, based on Bakhtin's theories, views speech as purposeful. As the ethical ethos of minimising harm to the informants was returned to throughout, including in the writing up, ethical considerations are discussed alongside the relevant methods with an additional section towards the end of the chapter which outlines the procedures to ensure informed consent.

As a qualitative study, and given the uniqueness of lived experience, generalisability is not sought, nor are any such claims made. The validity of this research is instead appropriately demonstrated by the rich depth of insights into lived experience, with the stories also illustrating a clear resonance with existing theory and research, which makes a compelling contribution. This is supported by researcher reflexivity regarding positionality and interpretation. Despite the volume and richness of the experiential materials, meaning that was not possible to include all of its many facets, overall, the methods were considered successful in evoking the lived experience of unemployment, and thus doing justice to the phenomenon.

3.2. Ontology and Epistemology

The ontology and epistemology underpinning this thesis are aligned with the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. As has been outlined in the Introduction and Literature Review chapters, this perspective is significantly intertwined with the theoretical interpretations of the informant's experiences. This reflects the way that bodily concerns were prominent in the informant's expressions. Merleau-Ponty's ontology and epistemology starts with the body and its lived experience, rather than consciousness, and thereby avoids the privileging of epistemology that is inherent when the mind is seen as the starting point of knowledge. Merleau-Ponty emphasised the need to return to the world as initially perceived and experienced, while recognising that this was a difficult thing to do, especially due to the embeddedness of Cartesian thought in which the mind is seen as separate from, and in control of, the world. From a Cartesian perspective, re-employment becomes possible through a simple mindset change, as reflected in the notion of the rational self outlined in the Literature Review. However, from a Merleau-Pontian perspective, this is a

secondary consideration built upon primary bodily experience. If bodily needs, such as hunger and safety, are not satisfied, then the body cannot be transcended to live a psychological existence. Foregrounding the body enables a material, embodied perspective on unemployment, lessening the influence of a purely psychological perspective, and allowing a more balanced consideration of non-psychological needs and suffering. Thereby, Merleau-Ponty's thought enables an understanding of the experiences of people who are marginalised and subordinated (see section 1.4.1.) that a Cartesian perspective cannot.

Merleau-Ponty's thesis has been described as an epistemology of the primacy of perception and an ontology of the primacy of phenomena (Dillon, 1997: 51). Phenomena are human experiences (van Manen, 2014: 37) which can only be known via perception as the means by which the body experiences the world. Although perception is typically associated with sight, Merleau-Ponty's conception cannot be reduced to sight alone, nor to the senses of the body as mere receptors of the outside world. Instead, if refers to the world being perceived as meaningful as it is lived through, prior to the reflection of consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: xix), or as Merleau-Ponty (*ibid*.: 354) clarifies, '[p]erceiving is living from a certain point of view'. Merleau-Ponty's (1964b: 16) later notion of the, 'flesh of the world' both develops and incorporates his earlier ontology and epistemology, although remaining broadly similar (Leder, 1990b: 212). The flesh is not in itself a substance (Hoel & Carusi, 2018), but designates a unity and sameness from which difference arises. Flesh represents the immediate, lived contact with the world prior to the intervention of consciousness, which only later reflects on this experience.

3.2.1. Reversibility of the Flesh

The rational self suggests a seemingly one-way relationship with the world, in which the self and its relations are created internally and then imposed externally. This means that the other is negated (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: 414) as it is not possible to constitute the other as constituting at the moment they are being constituted (Merleau-Ponty, 1964b: 93-94). Cartesian thought thereby constructs the social as an object, rather than the 'situation' of a body (*ibid*.: 112). It is a negative construction of difference from the starting point of

the subject/object split as an objectified other cannot be viewed as another self. Conversely, the notions of openness and situatedness inherent in the flesh of the world instead imply a two-way relationship between the self and others, as well as other things. This reversible relation means that a body cannot only see, touch and feel, but can also be seen, touched and felt. The ability of the body to affect the things of the world can only occur because of this capacity to reverse and likewise be affected, which in turn can only be realised because the body is in the world. Merleau-Ponty's (1964b: 166) well-known example of this is when one person brings their hands together such that the body both perceives and is an object, which is a relation which can be reversed between the hands rather than occurring at the same time. This reversibility can also occur through the flesh with others, meaning that there is a common intercorporeality occurring prior to intersubjectivity as a relation of consciousness. It thereby becomes possible to recognise other diverse perspectives, as through reversibility it is possible to see from the perspective of another. Therefore, while it is not possible to completely coincide with the other, a common understanding can be developed as selves who look out onto the same world. This reversibility of perspective opens the possibility of reciprocity (Johnson, 2008) through which the other can be recognised as another self, rather than as an objectified other. As was discussed in the Literature Review, treating unemployed people as a homogenous group tends to objectify them, and in some cases defines them as non-persons or as being lesser than human (see sections 2.4.4.2. and 2.4.3.). Understanding the world as flesh, rather than as an object, invites a reciprocal recognition of difference as an ethical relation which arises from the fundamental sameness shared within the flesh.

3.2.2. Flesh as Meaningful

Time and emotion are the two principal ways in which connections are made within the flesh between people and the things of the world, including others. The flesh is therefore already meaningful, rather than a nothingness onto which meaning is only imposed by consciousness. For Merleau-Ponty, temporality is fundamental to the self, to the extent that, prior to the creation of the "I" by consciousness, subjectivity is, 'nothing but temporality' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: 278). The past is present in a way that it is embedded in perception

without the necessity of, ‘appeal to memory’ (*ibid*.: 26) as an act of consciousness. It is emotion that determines the extent to which the memory is significant and therefore arises in the present. This forms the intentional threads (*ibid*.: 99) that attach body memory to the world, enabling it to, ‘reopen time on the basis of the implications contained in the present’ (*ibid*.: 210). Thus, Merleau-Ponty (*ibid*: 96) is able to describe the surfacing of past experiences in the present, such as trauma, not as mere memories but as a particular, ‘manner of being’ (*ibid*.) that forms the world around the sufferer. However, Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 21) was critical of the idea that these threads developed from nothing, believing that nothingness was not an absence, but always referred back to being. Merleau-Ponty’s (1968: 215) ontology instead refers to meaning as the invisible, ‘inner framework’ of the visible. This means that there is something more than that which is immediately visible: there is always an invisible component to experience. For example, social hierarchies are an unseen, but nevertheless experienced, part of things. This provides an understanding of how certain norms place a limit on action and cannot just be overcome by consciousness. Thus, Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009: 160) was able to define consciousness, not as, ‘I think’, but as, ‘I can’. This means that the past cannot be so easily discarded as is required by capitalist progress because it is not only within consciousness but in the world and the body.

3.2.3. The Self, the Body and Dialogue

In Merleau-Ponty’s thesis, the “I”, or self, which is the focus of Cartesian experience, only appears on reflection. In other words, it is created by thought, rather than being the condition under which thought occurs (Dillon, 1997: 110). Seeing oneself as separate from others is thereby an act of consciousness, or a way of thinking about the self’s relation to the world, rather than that relation as it is. This is because at the point of conscious reflection, the body is already involved with the world, and it is impossible to be freed from this constraint. Merleau-Ponty (1964a: 72) acknowledges that this can present limitations, particularly the impossibility of research being carried out objectively, however, it is the only way in which the world can be approached.

The body is not only the means of experiencing the world, but also that through which this experience can be expressed. This does not just mean speech, as

emotions do not need to be worded and are often understood through bodily gestures and facial expressions. Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2009: xviii) notion of the self as being open to the world, enabling it to extend beyond the traditional boundary of the skin, contrasts with a Cartesian private self which is expressed in a more controlled way through speech. If the individual is a "fold" in the flesh, then speech is the world speaking through one of its parts, and as such speech is, 'singing the world' (*ibid*.: 217). Speech is a central way in which meaning is sedimented into things and is acquired by individuals as a relational tool. The importance of others in formulating the self through speech is emphasised by both Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin. Referring back to the notion of reciprocity, Merleau-Ponty (*ibid*.: 150, 413) describes dialogue as creating a, 'common ground' and a, 'dual being', as well as those who know each other having an additional understanding of one another's gestures based on their prior experience of each other. Merleau-Ponty (*ibid.*: 122) concludes that, 'we are literally what others think of us and what our world is.' Similarly, Bakhtin (1986: 138) notes that 'I realize [sic] myself initially through others, from them I receive words, forms, and tonalities for the formation of my initial idea of myself.' The connections between Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on relations with others and Bakhtin's focus on dialogue is also reflected in the similarity between their respective theories of reversibility and dialogic as themes of ontological difference (Wegerif, 2006). Thereby, despite the world being already meaningful from Merleau-Ponty's perspective, that meaning can never be singular, finalised or concluded, but is messy, abstract and ambiguous, being the subject of a constant negotiation through dialogue. This notion of dialogue as a process of sensemaking of experience, as carried in individual bodies, but expressed with, and for, others has implications for how research is viewed, conducted and interpreted in order to understand the phenomenon of long-term unemployment through the perceptions of older men who have lived their lives in a disadvantaged, marginalised place.

3.3. Phenomenological Research

Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is considered to be a form of existential phenomenology (Low, 2000: 25). However, there are no specific methods that are considered to be phenomenological. Van Manen (2014: 133) suggests that this is because an approach that is too rigid could prevent the researcher from

understanding the phenomenon. Thereby, the researcher should be driven by the phenomenon in selecting appropriate methods for its investigation, with Errasti-Ibarrondo, Jordan, Diez-Del-Corral and Arantzamendi (2018) noting that qualitative approaches are normally adopted for phenomenological research. One key reason for this is that both phenomenology and qualitative methods are concerned with examining experiences. Additionally, Zahavi (2019) recommends that method should be inspired by the chosen phenomenological theorist or form of phenomenology, which in this case is Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's notion of experience being essentially intercorporeal would suggest an ideal method would be one in which interactions between the informants could be observed, which would include not only speech but other gestures and expressions. Although embodied research is not always undertaken from a Merleau-Pontian perspective, it typically involves ethnography, or at least observation, as it is also concerned with experience as it unfolds within its context. Likewise, phenomenology focusses upon lived experience, and ethnography provides the opportunity to observe experience first-hand, as well as witness discussions and sensemaking of this and other experiences.

3.3.1. Phenomenological Questioning

In phenomenology, as with many other forms of research, the process of inquiry begins with the formulation of questions. However, there are significant differences between a Cartesian, or scientific, approach to inquiry, which typically seeks to find an absolute truth or a solution to a perceived problem, and a phenomenological inquiry influenced by Merleau-Ponty. When formulating phenomenological research questions, it is necessary to adopt a phenomenological attitude towards the inquiry. In relation to Merleau-Ponty's approach, this attitude has been described as one of "wonder" (Spurling, 1977: 178; van Manen, 2014: 127). This is not an expectation that the phenomena in itself will be remarkable or amazing, but that the researcher will be open to seeing it from a different perspective. This typically involves immersion in the phenomena, such that wonder may be closely aligned with the commitment in ethnographic and visual research of everyday life to, "make the familiar strange" (Mannay, 2010; Mannay & Morgan, 2015). A phenomenological attitude is to view the world as mysterious, rich and inexhaustible, whereby

even that which is normally considered ordinary or mundane is seen as special. To achieve this, the researcher must question their own scientific preconceptions (see section 3.3.2.), and also immerse themselves in the phenomenon, accomplished in this research via ethnography and associated methods. Thus, phenomenological questions do not make judgements or aim to find causes of, or solutions to, predetermined problems but are based on a commitment to do the phenomenon justice.

3.3.2. To the Things Themselves

The phenomenological attitude would suggest that in order to see a phenomenon with wonder, the researcher must 'stand back' (Morris, 2018; 11) from their existing knowledge of the world. It should be noted, however, that this cannot be equated with the standpoint of objective detachment required in traditional scientific research. Despite this, there is disagreement regarding to extent to which the phenomenological researcher can, and should, stand back. The interpretation taken in this research is that a Merleau-Pontian approach to standing back falls between the extremes of research undertaken in the "natural attitude", and the phenomenological notion of bracketing and the epoche-reduction. The natural attitude is the non-reflective stance adopted in normal day-to-day life, whereas bracketing and the epoche-reduction requires the researcher's complete detachment from the world. While Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 22) agreed that phenomenology should attempt to return to the, 'things themselves', he did not believe it was possible to bracket out, or effectively eliminate, all pre-conceptions in order to see things as they really are. Specifically, as the researcher should be present as the phenomena unfolds in order to understand it, the researcher is therefore part of this unfolding, meaning bracketing is an impossibility. Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009: xxiii) instead believed standing back involved, 'relearning to look at the world'. One of Merleau-Ponty's central aims in doing this was to overcome conceptual dualisms. As it is not possible to bring dualistic categories back together once they have been separated by consciousness, the aim is to return to the point before this split occurs. However, as outlined in the Introduction Chapter, although adopting an embodied perspective supports the achievement of this, Merleau-Ponty recognised that it was practically impossible to completely avoid dualistic thought (Dillon, 1997: 101). Thereby, the researcher must become

aware of their preconceptions that are present in the natural attitude and confront these through reflection.

3.3.3. Research Questions

Guided by the outlined principles of phenomenological research and questioning, and by adopting a Merleau-Pontian attitude of wonder, which was maintained throughout the research, the following three questions were composed to guide the ethnographic fieldwork:

- How do long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?
- What is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?
- How do long-term unemployed men live through this experience?

The use of 'how' and 'what' questions aligns with the phenomenological ethos to explore lived experience and discover meaning. Although research questions do not necessarily need to remain fixed throughout the research process (Kim, 2016: 97), the broad nature of the questions meant they only changed slightly as knowledge was gained at the start of the fieldwork, and they then remained in place as a guide for the remainder of the research.

3.3.4. Phenomenological Truth

Before outlining how the research methods were utilised to address the research questions, it is important to clarify the type of truth the researcher expected could be asserted on the basis of those methods. The objective of a phenomenological inquiry differs significantly from that of a Cartesian, scientific inquiry as a search for a single and final truth. From a phenomenological perspective this is unfeasible given the impossibility of the underlying requirement for scientific detachment in order to obtain such a truth. Not only that, it also eliminates that which is inherent to lived experience: it's ambiguousness, unfinalisability and otherness. Essentially, Cartesian truth reduces others to objects by requiring that they are completely defined in order for it to be considered the truth.

However, phenomenological research does not attempt to objectify or finalise others but aims to see from the perspective of their lived experience and be open to their truth as they tell it, without moral judgement. In a Bakhtinian sense it would be unethical to finalise the informants because they are

continually evolving and therefore always need to reserve the right to speak the last word about themselves. Therefore, Frank (2005: 967, italics in original) notes that the most that can be said about an informant is, 'This is how I see this person now, but I cannot know what she or he will *become*.'

Likewise, an ethnography can never be considered finished, as Geertz (1983/2000a: 6), paraphrasing Valery, observes, 'Works are not finished…they are abandoned'. In defining ethnography, Geertz (1973/2000b: 9-10) equates it with writing, inscribing and, 'thick description', which is to describe behaviour, not in a scientific way, but to outline its context and potential motives. He thereby refers to ethnography as fiction, noting that this is not because it is false or nonfactual, but because it is interpretation (*ibid*.: 15-16), albeit an interpretation based on knowledge gained through immersion in the phenomenon and the people who are experienced in it via fieldwork. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty considered philosophical inquiry, not as a way of finding *the* truth, but *a* truth. Lived experience is from a particular perspective, and thereby, in Geertz's (*ibid.*) view, an ethnography is a perspective on that perspective with the purpose of evoking that lived experience for the reader.

The following sections outline how the expression of that experience was defined, based on the theories of Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin, and thereby the experiential material that was produced in the field, this being stories and photographs.

3.4. Creative Expression: Narrative and Stories

Merleau-Ponty's notion of expression as both constrained and creative, drawing upon sedimented meanings and using these for the speaker's own purposes, aligns with narrative as an interdisciplinary research approach. Narrative and stories are intertwined, with the terms often being used inter-changeably. However, narratives are generally seen as broader and guide individuals in making sense of experiences (Hawkins & Saleem, 2012), and thus can be related to sedimented meanings, whereas stories are descriptions of lived experienced (Kim, 2016: 9) and are therefore constructed by drawing upon narratives in creative ways. Typically, narratives are seen as something personal and unshared (Georgakopoulou, 2006), with the role of presenting a

coherency of self and identity. Despite being unshared they are significantly framed by cultural expectation and norms, such as those expressed in broader discourse, like the monologic perspective on unemployment. Therefore, both the immediate and wider context influence what, and how, stories are told. What is an acceptable story within the context is learned from experience of sharing stories, including telling, listening and responding, and thus it is not only the self, but others, who shape a story. Thus, stories may begin as difficult to tell, because they reflect the messy experience they represent, which Frank (1995: 98) referred to as chaos stories. Yet, over time, they become more refined, both drawing upon and contributing to narratives and discourse.

While one of the functions of this process is seen as building the self, and thus stories play a role in indicating the teller's identity to others, this is not the only purpose of narrative and stories. Georgakopoulou (2006) distinguishes between narrative inquiry, where narrative is used as a method to determine what stories reveal about the teller's self, and narrative analysis, which prioritises how narrative is used by a teller. It is the latter notion which aligns more closely with dialogical narrative analysis, which is a form of narrative analysis that has been developed based on the theories of Bakhtin. Stories are a dialogue not only because they are always addressed to someone, but because they are able to induce bodily affects in others. This emphasises that it is not only complete and coherent narratives, such as life histories, which are relevant, but the construction of stories and narratives in everyday life. In this respect, Georgakopoulou (2006) encouraged researchers to see what he called 'small stories' or, 'snippets of talk', and not only complete stories and narratives, as being important. Small stories are told in situ, and relate the past to the immediate future, covering various forms of talk that are often ignored in favour of more complete stories (*ibid*.). It should be noted that where snippets of talk are presented in this and the following two chapters, they have been italicised in order to distinguish them from the wider text. Given that small stories can be considered initial expressions of experience and sensemaking, they could be considered closer to the lived experience that phenomenology aims to access. The ethnographic approach enabled the observation of small stories that built on the informant's shared history and had the purpose of

sensemaking as well as affirming the self. The ethnographic approach is detailed in section 3.6.1. and dialogical narrative analysis in section 3.7.1.

3.5. Creative Expression: Art and Photography

While stories are a form of creative expression through speech, Merleau-Ponty also believed that art was one of the most direct ways of expressing the world, concentrating on painting as being both closely connected to pre-reflective experience and, unlike speech, unconstrained by previous expression. This attentiveness to painting is reflected throughout phenomenology (Purcell, 2010; 13). However, it is believed that other forms of visual research can express the ambiguity of lived experience. Pink's (2013: 30) notion of visual ethnography aligns with Merleau-Ponty's definition of perception as not limited to sight and views vision as an aspect of embodied experience which works in conjunction with the other senses. In line with narrative analysis, it is also a way of knowing, rather than just a method of data collection (*ibid*.). Visual ethnography involves being open to visual encounters throughout the ethnographic research, which in this inquiry included discussing a range of photographs with the informants, both existing images and those produced by the informants themselves. Photographs generated by the informants may be considered a way in which the invisible, as the informant's interpretations of what an image depicts, are made visible. Including some images within the ethnographic text, alongside the informants' explanations, provides an additional dimension of lived experience for the reader. The method of generating the photographs and descriptions, and the ethical implications of this are considered in section 3.6.2.

3.6. Methods

Ethnography is typically not seen as a method or technique in itself as, like phenomenology, it is not undertaken by following a step-by-step procedure. Also, as with phenomenology, ethnography is guided by the phenomenon itself and the wish to understand it. However, there are certain aspects which are common across ethnographic approaches, particularly observation and the taking of field notes. Observation is a method and can be considered an ethnographic tool as, although it can be used separately outside ethnographic research, it is an integral part of ethnography. It is particularly relevant to this ethnography due to the circumstances within the field, which involved a single

location where both the researcher and informants largely remained stationary. This heightened the senses of listening, watching and feeling the observed interactions. This also enabled detailed field notes to be made in situ, allowing the research to be overt in nature and thus aiming to counter perceptions of observation as a form of surveillance. Via the attitude of wonder and a commitment to ethics and trust building, the research observation and field notes were presented as a different form of non-judgemental looking. This contrasts with the men's descriptions of how they are subject to surveillance by as disrespectful, when it was overt within the Jobcentre, invasive, when it was overt outside the Jobcentre, and suspicious, when they were not certain whether they were under surveillance or not. Clearly this was a distinction that was negotiated between the researcher with the informants, rather than something imposed by researcher as a form of unethical surveillance might be. The ethnography, observation and field notes are discussed in section 3.6.1., with further details regarding the research ethics in section 3.8.

In part, this negotiation occurred via the participatory visual research. While the visual ethnography can be considered an integral part of the overall ethnographic approach which enabled the researcher to be open to visual encounters, the specific method of participatory visual research was also used. The approach was largely influenced by photovoice, a method based on the critical education theories of Paolo Freire, which has typically been used with marginalised people to build trust. Photovoice involves informants taking their own photographs which they then discuss with the researcher. While there are other participatory visual methods which follow a similar process, specifically photo-elicitation, photovoice always involves the informant's own images and attempts to give image and resulting descriptive text a more equal weighting as forms of knowledge, whereas photo-elicitation prioritises the resulting text. As this participatory, researcher initiated, element of the visual research started prior to the ethnographic observation it enabled relations to be gradually built with some of the men first. Although only Bob and Smithy both took photographs and completed the interview to discuss their images, this provided 40 photographs and over 40 pages of single-spaced interview transcript to further supplement the field notes. The visual ethnography and photovoice are discussed in section 3.6.3.

3.6.1. Ethnography

Ethnography involves spending a significant amount of time with people within an everyday context. In ethnographic terms, this context is known as the field. Given the centrality of the field to the ethnography itself, the concern tends to be with depth of understanding, rather than breadth. Therefore, ethnographies often take place on a small scale to enable this depth of knowledge to be developed (Mannay & Morgan, 2015). This is also a practical consideration given the amount of time necessary to effectively undertake fieldwork. Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007: 40) assertion that gaining access to the field can be problematic is particularly applicable for those wishing to directly observe interactions between the welfare state institutions and unemployed people, as the Department for Work and Pensions, which includes Jobcentres, typically do not allow research to take place on its premises. This means that methods involving direct and individual contact with unemployed people, jobseekers and claimants, such as interviews, tend to be more common (e.g. Gabriel, Gray & Goregaoker, 2010; Bartelheimer et al., 2012; Green, Buckner, Milton, Powell, Salway & Moffatt, 2017). When ethnographic research and observation does take place, it is more often in conjunction with organisations subcontracted to deliver welfare services such as training and job searching, for example, Beck's (2018) research. Giazitzoglu's (2014) participant observation of young unemployed men is also an exemplar, although it explored wider social relations rather than their interaction with the Jobcentre or other employment support services.

In this research, the field setting was a "Work Club" set up and staffed by a sub-contractor which took place two-hours per week in a public place; a Community Centre[5] close to where all the men live. The Centre is open five days a week for members of the public to meet and use the computers and other resources. The researcher dealt directly with the two Case Workers, a common title for those who work with unemployed jobseekers, and the men attending the Work Club after having been referred by two managers at the sub-contracting organisation. While the roles of the Case Workers, Debbie and Steph, are funded by the Jobcentre, they are not directly employed and instead

[5] Name of the location has been changed to support protecting the identity of the informants.

work for the sub-contractor. Being spatially outside the official space of the Jobcentre enabled the Case Workers to promote a more informal atmosphere which they contrasted with formal training programmes, describing the Work Club to one potential new joiner as a place where, '*nobody gets told off*' (FN 100). Debbie describes their approach when she explains that, '*you can't come in all high and mighty, looking down on them*' because, as she says, that doesn't work. What Debbie thinks does work is to, '*have a bit of banter*', to get to know the men well and to find out about them (FN 30). The purpose of Work Club is for the Case Workers to supervise the men applying for jobs and help them with writing CVs (Curriculum Vitae), which involves Debbie and Steph at times coaching and prompting the men to make the "right" choices and at others expressing frustration that this is pointless. Therefore, they are part of what Peter and Polgar (2020) referred to as the Caseworker Paradox as their relation to the men is both one of helping and disciplining. While the focus of the research was upon the unemployed men, Debbie and Steph's interactions and dialogues with them formed a crucial part of understanding how the men interact with those implementing welfare state unemployment policy.

Likewise, it is important to place myself as the researcher within the research context, which Ghodsee (2016: 25) emphasises is how the credibility of an ethnography is established. Therefore, at relevant points in this chapter I will discuss the researcher role in the first person. While it was initially a concern that the men would identify me with the Case Workers and thus be less accepting or open, the perception that I was associated with the Case Workers, rather than the men, was almost unavoidable given my gender and age being closer to that of the Case Workers than the men. In actuality, the Case Workers and their established relations with the men appeared to smooth access to the field, upon which, over time, I was able to build a relation as researcher with both Case Workers and men.

3.6.1.1. Field and Informants

The Community Centre where Work Club takes place is mostly open plan, but fairly small. It has a welcome desk, behind which are two resource areas, and beyond that is a group of five desks with computers. On Thursday mornings a "reserved" sign is placed in this area to ensure it is free for Work Club

attendees. At the back of the centre are some small separate rooms, consisting individually of a kitchen, meeting room, toilets and training room. In front is a single desk without a computer and then six further computers on desks form a line across the front wall back towards the door. In the middle of the room between the two desk areas is a small meeting table with four chairs. The men would wait outside until the shutters were raised just after 10am and then each trudge towards their usual seat. The number of desks meant that sometimes one or two men had to sit apart from the others. As there would normally be no free computers, and the meeting table was too far away, I would pull up a chair and sit close by the men. The Case Workers tend to stand and move between the men. While the Case Workers would engage me in conversation, the men tended to talk between themselves, directing the odd comment or question towards me, or seeking a reaction from me. They tended to avoid direct questions when asked until later in the fieldwork. Although there were frequent breaks in the conversation, often these silences did not last long. Thereby, although my presence was overt, my role was much more focussed on observation and taking field notes rather than interacting with the informants. It should also be noted that there were other people present in the field who were not considered central to the ethnography. In some cases, the decision was made to exclude these people for various reasons including them not being attendees at Work Club, or regular attendees, them not aligning with the characteristics set out in the research questions and their characteristics potentially making them more easily identifiable.

Given that it is the researcher participating in the lifeworld of the ethnographic subjects, rather than the subjects participating in the research, individuals are more commonly referred to as informants in phenomenological research (van Manen, 2014; 43), as well as in visual research (Harper, 2002; Clark-Ibanez, 2004), rather than the term 'participants' used in wider qualitative research. The term informants is used here to refer to both the Case Workers and men as a group, whereas when referring only to the unemployed men, the term ‘men’ is used. This is not intended to homogenise them, but for the purposes of describing the research in a more straightforward way. Given the men’s description of themselves as, ‘the Gadgie Club’ (FN 273) - their play on the Jobcentre given title of Work Club, thereby transforming it into a male-only

space, localised through the use of the slang term for man, ‘gadgie’ – they likely would not object to being referred to as ‘men’. However, the term ‘informant’ was not used in front of the men given its association with being a, ‘*copper’s nark*’, or informing on local others to the Police; a role decried by the men (FN 224). Therefore, it is emphasised that ‘informant’ is utilised in the strict research sense of a person within the ethnographic field who is imparting knowledge to the researcher about their own life.

3.6.1.2. Non-Participatory Observation

It is gender, and age, that underpin the Club’s existence, it having been set up around one year before the start of the ethnography due to perceptions at the sub-contracting organisation that long-term unemployment had diminished the confidence of male jobseekers aged around 50 years and over, and that existing interventions tended to focus on accessing “feminine” work, thereby leaving a gap in support for male jobseekers. Ainsworth and Hardy (2007) indicate that these gendered assumptions regarding psychological causes for long-term unemployment are common, and this was explored as an aspect of the problematisation of older long-term unemployed men in the Literature Review (see section 2.2.5.). While the aim as phenomenological research was to get as close as possible to this experience, it was neither necessary nor practical for me to participate in the same activities as the men or the Case Workers. In the first instance, it was not only age and gender, but my employed status that presented a clear barrier, reflected through my clothing and my accent. In the latter case, as outlined previously, there was an attempt to distinguish myself from the Case Workers, although I did occasionally briefly help the men with tasks on the computer when asked directly because the Case Workers weren’t there, such as typing, saving or attaching documents. Ferguson (1999: 208) noted how, in a typical ethnographic field setting, ‘understanding must take on a different character when to understand things like the natives is to miss most of what is going on.’ Therefore, I concentrated on developing understanding by undertaking what Geertz (1973/2000b: 19) defined as the purpose of ethnography: to inscribe, or write down, what was happening. This meant that my role as researcher was clear and overt, and, as has been noted in in other ethnographies such as Ackroyd and Crowdy (1990),

I became known in the field as being there because I was “writing a book” about their lives.

While Mannay and Morgan (2015) warned against placing too much emphasis on tools, which can distract from this central ethos and purpose of ethnography, writing is based on observation, and therefore observation is considered to be a central ethnographic tool. However, ethnographic observation is more than just looking and recording what is seen, and thereby involves more than the sense of sight. It is listening, feeling and living within the research field. Embodied research therefore involves not only concentrated attention to observe the informant’s embodied lived experiences, but the embodied participation of the researcher as an inseparable element in the unfolding of the phenomenon. Although capturing the essence of lived experience is not a straightforward task, Kim (2016: 54) notes that ‘direct description’ of experience is an important part of phenomenological research based on the theories of Merleau-Ponty, aligning with Geertz’s (1973/2000b: 9-10) emphasis on ethnography as, ‘thick description’. The ability to produce such descriptions is enabled by producing detailed field notes.

3.6.1.3. Field Notes

Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 57) believed voice recording to be ineffective in capturing all aspects of a phenomenon because it reduces the experience to sound alone. Those aspects of any interaction which are silent, such as context, gestures and facial expressions are at least equally important as what is said, particularly in embodied research, yet these nuances are lost in voice recording. Field notes are a means by which a researcher can provide detailed written accounts, taken directly from experience when written in situ, to reflect upon later when writing up. As noted in section 3.7.2., reflection is a critical aspect of phenomenological research, with field notes forming part of the experiential material necessary for reflection and analysis.

There are no specific conventions for producing field notes and, as with ethnography in general, content tends to be driven by the phenomena itself and what the researcher wishes to find out. Field notes are not always made within the field, with some believing that this makes the researcher’s presence too

obvious, to the extent that it affects what occurs in the field. For example, Kim (2016: 100) determined to write field notes away from the field after being called a ‘spy’, and Sanger (1996: 2-3) was disappointed to later find that students had been writing notes to each other about what he was doing, prompting him to question whether he had observed what was “really” going on in the field. The researcher’s presence in the field, whether they are overt and known to be a researcher or not, is going to impact on others. Therefore, taking the decisions to write my field notes in situ allowed a continual openness about what was being written. Any concerns, which were occasionally raised in a joking manner by the informants, including being called a spy (FN 227), could thereby be directly addressed. Additionally, the informants more often mentioned things they wanted me to include, which tended to concern negative experiences, which they would ask me to write down (FN 313, 441, 473). Although the informants never asked for anything *not* to be included, or for something recorded to be removed, they retained the right to withdraw and I also continued to exercise discretion over whether it would be ethical to include certain stories in the final write-up (see section 3.8.1.). Thus, writing field notes in situ not only supported the attempt to reach “the things themselves” through direct and immediate experience, but was part of the ongoing negotiation of my relations with the informants.

Field notes were written by hand and then typed up, normally later the same day or as soon as possible after the handwritten notes were made. This resulted in over 100 A4 single-spaced typed pages of field notes based on over 70 hours of observation and interaction with the informants taking place between October 2017 and September 2018. Typed field notes were separated, in date order, into over 800 paragraphs of varying length which supported retaining notes within their context during analysis. The paragraph length was determined by when the conversation moved onto a different topic, especially where there was a pause, silence, or something happened, such as somebody doing something, asking for help, or walking into the room. The field notes include detailed descriptions, for example, describing a smile as a ‘cheeky grin’ (FN 103). However, reflections and theoretical interpretations were not included in the field notes and only came later during the analysis. The field notes have been referenced throughout this thesis using the notation

‘FN’ in order to indicate the breadth of the experiential material and how it is being directly drawn upon, thereby supporting methodological rigour.

Handwritten notes do have weaknesses, in that it is not possible for the researcher to record everything that occurs in the field, and therefore they must be selective. When these decisions were made, they were guided by the research questions and the practical wisdom gained through experience in the field as it developed. There is a high level of confidence that verbal expressions were recorded accurately, however, it can never be totally certain that they are exact. For example, excerpts from the interview transcripts contain much higher levels of contractions and colloquial expressions than were written down in the field notes. Therefore, some compromises must be made in order to record the type of rich accounts included in the field notes.

3.6.2. Visual Ethnography

As was noted previously, ethnography is the outcome of the research process, rather than the method in itself and is thus a way of knowing. Thereby, visual ethnography provides access to knowledge beyond text alone by focussing on the visual aspects of experience, in particular, photographs. However, it goes beyond the sense of sight by considering meaning which surpasses that which is seen. In Merleau-Pontian terms it might be considered to be a way to access the invisible and sedimented aspects of experience, as it provides an understanding of things that both can and can’t be seen (Pink, 2013: 38). With regards to the latter, it can enable the ethnography to be extended beyond the field location in a way that provides the informant with a choice in the extent to which they reveal their everyday life to the researcher. Participatory visual photography is widely recognised as a method that can help build rapport with informants who are marginalised (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Richard & Lahman, 2011; Pain, 2012; Pilcher, Martin & Williams, 2016) and bridge the gap between researcher and researched (Harper, 2002; Packard, 2008), particularly if the distance is considered to be large, due to factors such as an age gap (Drew, Duncan & Sawyer, 2010). One way in which this is achieved is by providing a focus for discussion in interviews and by encouraging informants to discuss aspects of their lives that they may think too mundane to mention. Both these features were considered important in this research context, where

the formality and power imbalance of the traditional interview may have reflected Jobcentre practices and those of employers, indicated by the men's reluctance to answer direct questions.

Building rapport is considered to be essential to ethnography (O'Hara & Higgins, 2017) in order to get closer to the informants, their lived experience and their meanings as they attribute them. As the following examples demonstrate, this was more like a continual negotiation of a relation with the researcher that appeared to refute the informant's established experiences of how power relations "should be". This explains in part why only two of the informants, Bob and Smithy, completed the taking and interpreting of their own photographs. Even then, Smithy explained that he had to speak to Bob, after Bob had already completed his photographs, to ensure that he wasn't going to get, '*stitched up*' (FN. 55), or otherwise tricked, blamed or put into a difficult situation. The strength of the rapport built was demonstrated when, towards the end of the ethnography, Smithy confirmed, '*if we didn't trust you, we wouldn't talk to you*.' (FN 579).

3.6.2.1. Photographs: 'To us they're memories'

Pink (2013: 147) emphasised how visual research should follow emotions and stories rather than attempting to be too controlled or systematic. This aligns with both a phenomenological approach and dialogical narrative analysis as it seeks to preserve ambiguity and expressivity and avoid objectification. At first, visual encounters were initiated by the researcher, such as discussing a booklet of images produced by a local history society and asking the informants to take their own photographs. However, this led to the informants instigating their own visuals, such as Bob bringing in a black and white family photograph album from the 1930s and spontaneously providing me with a tour of his former workplace via Google Street View (FN 148-154). The internet was a source of images that the informants would sometimes draw upon to demonstrate something or emphasise a point.

As all of these visual encounters involved photographs it is worthwhile defining this in relation to phenomenology and thereby how they enable access to the visible and invisible. A photograph tends to be viewed culturally as a depiction

of something real, or in other words, something that does, or did, exist in the world (Goble, 2013; Crippen, 2015). However, this is typically layered with subjective interpretations of what an image shows. Merleau-Ponty (1964a: 14) emphasised that the lived perspective or, 'that which we actually perceive', is not photographic. This is because subjective interpretations are required to reveal the 'intentional threads' that tie the viewer to that which is shown in a photograph, if it is something the viewer is familiar with. This was reflected in visual aspects throughout the ethnography when the informants interpreted both existing images and their own images. The majority of these photographs were of places in the local area, including landscapes and buildings and, when viewing these images, they tended to discuss things that had happened there and changes to the environment shown, such as what was there before and what was there now. The ability of images to prompt discussions of lived experience which go beyond what the photograph appears to show was emphasised by Smithy when he explained, '*These are just photos to you, but to us they're memories*' (FN. 159).

3.6.2.2. Participatory Visual Methods

Asking research informants to take their own images related to the research questions is broadly referred to as, 'participant photography' (Prins, 2010; O'Hara & Higgins, 2017), or 'participatory visual research' (Packard, 2008), and is closely associated with ethnography (Gubrium & Harper, 2013: 16). It is typically used with people considered to be marginalised as a way to enable them to be more actively involved in the research process and to challenge power imbalances. For example, the method has been used with homeless people (Wang, Cash & Powers, 2000; Packard, 2008) communities affected by HIV/AIDS (Harley, 2012) and unemployed people (Griep et al., 2015; Dougherty, Schraedley, Gist-Mackay & Wickert, 2018) to understand what their lives are like from their perspective. Within such contexts it is also referred to as 'photovoice', a technique influenced by the principles of Paolo Freire, who emphasised the importance of dialogue in education to enable a more egalitarian relation between educator and student. Photovoice has been criticised in the instances when it has been used with the assumption that resolves both the informant's subordinated position and the weaknesses in the broader ethnographic research (Ball & Smith, 2001: 119; Prins 2010). Some

forms of photovoice have tended to focus on the power of the image to help others to see from the informant's perspective, however, it has not always been effective in achieving this. For example, the photographic display resulting from Wang, Cash and Powers' (2000) photovoice study on homelessness did not prompt the intended political change. In the absence of a specifically existential theory of photography, phenomenological research has tended to draw on Barthes in particular (Fisher, 2008), who emphasised the importance of the image being able to affect the viewer. Such expectations have been found to place undue pressure on informants to produce "good" photographs and providing training and advice regarding the production of images largely reinforces existing power imbalances that the method aims to challenge. Thereby, participatory visual research has tended to be more successful when guidelines are very loose, with a focus on finding out more about the informant's lives outside the ethnographic field setting. In line with these considerations, the informants in this study were asked merely to photograph, what it's like to be unemployed, given a choice of camera (disposable or digital), and a flexible return date was negotiated. They were also provided with an information sheet and consent forms for any subjects they photographed, which were ethical requirements (see section 3.8.1.). Clark-Ibanez (2004) has noted that such approaches tend to result in photographs of mundane, everyday objects, however, given the aim of the research was to find out about the informant's perspective underpinned by an attitude of making the familiar strange, the potential for such images was not seen as an issue in itself.

3.6.2.3. 'You're the one with the eye'

As the participatory visual approach was the first contact the researcher had with some of the informants, their assumption of how the power dynamic would operate, and thus, the expectations regularly placed on them by the Jobcentre, quickly became apparent. This included expecting to be told exactly what to photograph (FN 87), anticipating being required to be continually and immediately available (FN 1, 4, 19) and correcting me when I tried to sit in the seat next to them, telling me that the chair behind the desk facing the computer was, my *'side'* (FN 39). Later, an opportunity arose to display some of the informant's photographs at a local art gallery as part of an academic conference. While this aligns with a photovoice approach, it was not an original

aim of the participatory research and therefore there was not pressure on the men to produce “exhibition worthy” images. As such, this was an additional opportunity to build the researcher relationship by involving the men in all the decision making, from deciding whether to participate, selecting the images and attending the gallery. However, this in itself was not straightforward, with Bob continually stating, ‘*whatever you like*’ (FN 39, 102) in answer to questions and Smithy responding, ‘*we’re just Council, you’re the one with the eye*’ (FN 524). At times this seemed like a test, such as when Smithy asked why the men had been given credit for their photographs in the gallery, rather than me taking credit for myself. However, as these continual negotiations and reassurances imply, participatory visual research was not a simple tool that enabled unproblematic rapport building through the ceding of power. As Packard (2008) points out, based on his participatory visual research with homeless people, understanding you will be heard is a learned skill. Additionally, it cannot be assumed that informants will welcome such opportunities, given the reluctance of others to take part, nor that there will be any emancipatory effect.

3.6.2.4. “Giving Voice”

Despite the idea that research can have an emancipatory effect on marginalised people by conferring voice being widely criticised as a naïve and romanticised notion (e.g. Crang, 2005; Braun & Clark, 2006; Prins, 2010; McGarry, 2016), it remains linked to participatory visual research. While it would be unethical for the researcher to speak for the informants, which Merleau-Ponty referred to a form of residual violence (Whiteside, 1991: 375), it can neither be assumed that the researcher provides the only opportunity for the informants to speak for themselves. As Crotty (1998: 196-197) noted, they already, ‘speak and have been speaking’ for themselves prior to the arrival of the researcher. Therefore, more critical participatory visual research has framed its purpose not as ‘providing’ voice (Smith, Mountain & Hawkins, 2015: 706), but as ‘capturing’ (Beck, 2018: 10), highlighting (Richard & Lahman, 2011) and ‘promoting’ (Drew, Duncan & Sawyer, 2010: 1677) the hearing of informant’s voices and perspectives. This requires listening without judgement in order to allow informants to present their own interpretations and a commitment to the careful representation of informant’s voices.

The informant's interpretations of their own photographs were discussed during photo-interviews. This involved me sitting down individually with the informants, Bob and Smithy, while they took me through each of their images. This provided a focus for the discussion, rather than me asking them direct questions, which the men often avoided during the observation. The interviews were digitally voice recorded and then transcribed, which enabled a more authentic representation of how the informants speak, such as the use of word contractions which were not necessarily captured in the field notes. This interview process is common to both photovoice and photo-elicitation. However, photovoice always focusses on participant generated images and does not seek to replace image with text, but to retain both. Pink (2013: 65) suggests that this avoids the notion of the photo-interview as an act of taking away information from the informant. While this process cannot be considered collaborative, as it meets researcher rather than informant objectives, it is part of the wider commitment to, as Frank (1995: 24) termed it, 'witness' the voices and experiences that tend to otherwise be marginalised and subordinated. Throughout the research the informants voiced disbelief that someone would be interested in researching them, as well as demonstrating that they enjoyed someone paying attention to them, laughing at their jokes and listening to their stories (e.g. FN 119, 165). Once transcribed, the interview text and related images were considered alongside the field notes during the analysis. Together this information provided a rich and multi-dimensional picture of the informant's lives.

3.7. Analysis

As outlined, the basis of the ethnography is detailed field notes, photographs produced by the informants and transcripts for the interviews where the researcher and informant discussed their photographs. In phenomenological terms this is known as, 'experiential material' (van Manen, 2014: 20, 297) as it contains the details of the informants' lived experiences which form the basis of phenomenological reflection. These materials were treated as a whole rather than separately, with the photographs being numbered and attached to the transcripts at the point they were discussed in the interview. As is common with many forms of qualitative analysis, for example, Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis, the first stage of the analysis process was to gain a

familiarity with this experiential material by reading and re-reading it numerous times, in date order. This enabled a holistic overview to be developed and also facilitated initial judgements about important stories and linkages between discussions on different dates. While thematic analysis does not tend to be used in phenomenological research, because it can separate experience from its meaningful context, existential themes can be useful for interrogating data (Finlay, 2013). The main existential themes are considered to be relationality, corporeality, spatiality, temporality and materiality (van Manen, 2014: 302), with various others such as death (*ibid*.), discourse (Ashworth, 2003), freedom and oppression (Finlay, 2013) being appended. The existential themes were used to initially structure both the experiential material and the literature as a means by which it could be grouped more holistically, given each existential theme is relevant to most forms of experience. Thereby, the text was retained within its contextual paragraph and aligned with the relevant existential theme(s). The existential themes most relevant to this research were considered to be corporeality, relationality, spatiality, temporality, freedom and death. At the same time, dialogical narrative analysis was used to look at the experiential material in terms of Bakhtinian genres and linguistic devices, which led into the interpretation, reflection and writing up.

3.7.1. Dialogical Narrative Analysis

Dialogical narrative analysis views speech as purposeful because it has an ability to affect others. Bakhtin (1984a: 110) described dialogue is a collective search for truth, and as such could be described as negotiating, or creating, a truth. Merleau-Ponty's (1973: 65) notion of the fleetingness of a conversation further emphasises that dialogue is an ongoing process. While interpretations are made by the researcher of speaker intention, a central commitment of dialogical narrative analysis is not to finalise the character of the speaker. Dialogical narrative analysis thus recognises utterances as representative of a particular moment in space and time, considering those particular circumstances as an important backdrop to what is said. This provides recognition that dialogue is 'living' (Sullivan, 2012: 2), and representative of ongoing struggles for meaning, understanding and affirmation of the self. Through retaining the dialogues in the vignettes presented in the following chapter, different perspectives and thus the potential for alternative outcomes

is preserved. This potential can be described most simply as the possibility of either positively affirming or negatively denying the self. While theories of the gaze of the other tend to be objectifying and thus negative, both Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin emphasised the positive potential for others to complete the self (see section 2.5.8.). This inequality in dialogue and the choice of whether to address it means dialogical narrative analysis has an ethical imperative to bring attention to the struggles to assert marginalised truths and possible alternatives.

There are different forms of dialogical narrative analysis, which range from very structured, such as Sullivan's (2012: 73) summary tables of context, chronotope (space-time) and genre, to Frank's (2010) avoidance of forcing stories into a strict thematic framework. A typical approach in dialogical narrative analysis is to view individual life stories as dialogues with public narratives for the purpose of identity formation (Blix, Hamran & Normann, 2013). As most of the experiential material forming the basis of this research differed significantly from individual life stories, a combination of approaches was used. First, the existential themes were applied, as outlined in the previous section. Then it was considered which stories may represent Bakhtinian genres, chronotopes, discourses (monoglossia/heteroglossia), and reversibility. Finally, reflecting on the research questions throughout writing up enabled the stories that best spoke to those questions to be selected according to Frank's (2010: 4) principle in dialogic narrative analysis of, 'letting stories breathe'. This places an ethical responsibility on the researcher to use their knowledge of the field to select the stories that best tell the situation, and to retell them in such a way that they appeal to others to recognise this.

Applying Bakhtin's theories to the experiential material enabled the most prominent genres and chronotopes to be identified and then linked to the questions. Bakhtin divided genres into two types; those supporting monoglossia (epic, tragedy, lyric) and those supporting heteroglossia (irony, parody, novel) (Sullivan, 2012: 46). Stories of tragedy align with the first research question, whereas parody and irony align with the third research question. The carnivalesque was the most prominent chronotope, closely linked to local experiences in childhood and early adulthood. Finally, Bakhtin's

dialogue as a type of ontological difference that shares similarities with Merleau-Ponty's chiasm as inherent in reversibility also enabled the identification of the switching of perspectives. Thus, applying these theories alongside the existential themes enabled a typology of stories to be produced (see Appendix 1) to underpin the writing up. Once the typology was completed it was checked by reading, re-reading and looking at the materials again to adjust and ensure it was representative.

It should be noted that this approach aligns with phenomenology as a philosophical approach, rather than phenomenology as qualitative research (PQR). The latter method, exemplified by the analyses of Giori, van Manen, and Smith, Flowers and Larkin, has been criticised for assuming that meaning is resident within the data, or uncovered within a text itself without recourse to theory (Paley, 2017: 15). This would be incompatible with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy which viewed the world as inherently meaningful, but only when viewed from a particular perspective, which cannot be fully known by another. Therefore, the approach selected aligns not only with the theory of Bakhtin, but Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and philosophy.

3.7.2. Reflection and Description

In line with Geertz's (1973/2000: 9-10) definition, it is widely accepted that ethnography *is* writing. While the written field notes, images and transcripts form the basis of this process, it is the writing up of these into a final account that produces the ethnography. After all, the reader will only see the ethnography, and not the field notes, and therefore the researcher must determine how to best represent what has been learned in the field. While there is no prescription on how to write an ethnography, a good ethnography is written in a way that is able to evoke people and places for the reader through description (Ghodsee, 2016). While early attempts at creativity in presenting ethnographic accounts was criticised as overly subjective, it is now recognised that researcher presence and judgement is an essential part of ethnography (van Maanen, 1988/2010: 47). However, it is necessary that the researcher demonstrates not only knowledge and passion about their subject (Ghodsee, 2016: 10), but reflexively recognises their position in relation to the research informants and thus the perspective from which the ethnography is written.

Reflexivity is defined as, ‘someone being able to examine his or her own feelings, reactions and motives (= reasons for acting) and how these influence what he or she does or thinks in a situation’ (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Thus, reflection is two-fold: the researcher’s reflection upon the experiential material to interpret its meaning, and reflexivity as a reflection upon this reflection in order to understand why and how these particular interpretations were made. A third layer may be added by the reflection of the reader, and therefore the researcher also needs to consider, or allow room for, potential alternative interpretations. While considerations such as reliability, validity and sample size are more closely associated with quantitative research, qualitative approaches must still demonstrate credibility and rigour. Tracy and Hinrichs (2017: 4) outline that one of the most important ways to achieve this is via description which demonstrates the, ‘richness and complexity’ of that which is studied. This depth was achieved by concentrating on spending time with the nine informants. Needless to say, this means that quantitative criteria of generalisability of research findings beyond the field is not possible. However, McIntosh and Wright’s (2018: 460) notion of ‘typicality’ means that accounts may be comparable to those with similar experiences. Appropriate links are also made between description and theory, establishing a clear resonance between this and existing research, as well as making a contribution, which is intended to be interesting and compelling to others. This is supported by self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher which demonstrates, ‘vulnerability, honesty and transparency’ (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017: 5), as outlined in the following positionality statement.

3.7.3. Self-reflexivity and Positionality

The presence of the researcher’s body throughout the fieldwork and ethnography, to the extent that it is, ‘literally the data collection instrument’ (Ocejo, 2017: 272), necessitates a form of embodied self-reflexivity. This not only involves researcher self-awareness, but the ability to identify feelings as ‘mine’ (Stawarska, 2002: 159) and thus subjective potential influences on the research, rather than objective interpretations. It is not always possible, or necessary, to understand, agree with or feel empathy for informants. Yet by

acknowledging through reflexivity how informants make the researcher feel, it is possible to nevertheless treat their perspective ethically and with respect.

While I am keen to foreground the experiences of the informants as the most important aspect of this research, the subjective nature of ethnography which I have outlined means something would be amiss if I did not, to paraphrase Ghodsee (2016: 23) “place myself into the research”. Learning by doing is the uncomfortable yet necessary nature of ethnography, yet this learning curve was only made steeper by, at the same time, also having to learn how to be an academic. Around a year before this research was formally approved, I left a well-established career as a public sector manager in human resources. While this was a welcome change, the cultural differences were stark; having moved from a position in which personal and political opinions were actively suppressed by a corporate mould, to one in which much more freedom of expression was possible. I started from the position of my experience in my previous career of managing projects to support unemployed social housing tenants to find jobs, coupled with an interest in Marxism and then allowed the phenomenon to take me on a journey. It took a little time to be able to trust my instincts, but I always sought to completely immerse myself in the experience and was not satisfied until I had discovered the theories and insights that I felt resonated best with the experiences of the people I had met in the field. Thus, I was truly open to, ‘relearning to look at the world’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009: xxiii), and starting a different career supported that.

However, there are other aspects of the research experience which could not be changed and therefore the potential impact they had on the field, and interpretations made, need to be evaluated. In particular, my positionality with regards to my identifying characteristics, specifically gender, age and class. While it cannot be assumed that people of shared gender also share the same experiences (Brine, 2010: 133), identifying as a female meant that I was excluded from, ‘the Gadgie Club’ (FN 273), as the men termed themselves, as a group. However, as I experienced it, this also seemed to closely align with class as well as gender. Although my upbringing would designate me as working class, academia is generally to be considered a middle-class, or at least privileged, career, and I was certainly considered by the men to be above

them in the social hierarchy. I was generally seen as a *'student'* but also an *'expert'* because I come from a University, which even Debbie considered to be *'posh'* (FN 96, 299, 733). Although I dressed down to go to Work Club, which was not always possible because I often had to go straight from Work Club to teaching, Debbie had commented that I had, *'some nice clothes'*, even when I was dressed casually, and she compared how I dressed to the holes in her shoes (FN 366). Thus, even when I made efforts to disguise my status, it still seemed obvious to others. While I do believe my localness, having lived in the region for a long time and having an associated accent, helped to bridge this gap, I was not considered by the men to speak *'proper Geordie'* (FN 276, 663). My age was also clearly delineated by the men and I was referred to *as 'young 'un'* and being, *'just a babby* [baby]' in comparison to them (FN 82, 289), something which they also related to me being a *'student'*. My appearance and name was finalised by the men one day when Smithy and Doug kept looking from me to their computer screen and laughing. When I went to see what they were doing, they pointed to a Googled photograph of Nana Mouskouri and then pointed to me, after which the men called me *'Nana'* (FN 674).

My gender and perceived age afforded me what felt like protective stance from some members of the group. For example, Bob mentioned that he had told the others off for swearing in front of me (FN 82) and Smithy took it upon himself to get my digital camera back when one of the others didn't return it and couldn't be contacted (FN 311). The men's stories about their experiences with other men also indicated to me that me being a female researcher provided a less threatening presence, with my general approach reflecting qualities perceived to be feminine such as empathy and caring, and as such this was potentially beneficial to the research. The Case Workers confirmed to me that the men had been somewhat suspicious of me at first, but generally did not act any differently to how they had done prior to me attending (FN 270). My relationship with the Case Workers was perhaps more unexpected as I had anticipated their approach to be more oppressive and therefore, I had more sympathy for the men. I came to view the situation from both sides, and the Case Workers as an important part of the men's experiences of the implementation of welfare state unemployment policy. Therefore, while there is a particular political

perspective which underpins my positionality, I have ensured that this is fully supported by both theory and experience from the field.

3.7.4. Writing up

The writing up aimed to preserve the dialogue of different voices by presenting the stories told by the men as vignettes. A vignette is a literary genre commonly used in ethnography to provide a brief evocative description of something that occurs within the field. While traditionally a vignette focusses on something that happened over a short period of time, more recent conceptions have used vignettes to weave together events which best represent the fieldwork (Jacobsen, 2014). This is also a technique in dialogical narrative analysis, allowing conversations that occurred at different times to be brought into dialogue with one another in order to contrast different perspectives (see Sullivan, 2012: 117). Like all ethnographic writing, there is no set structure or approach to writing a vignette, and therefore this was guided by the aim to balance evocative description, careful representation of the informant's voices and a focus on the story as it was constructed in the field. Most often, conversations and stories were not told sequentially in full, but returned to at different times. This means that each vignette normally draws upon more than one paragraph in the field notes, and sometimes several. However, these are still aligned closely with the notes and normally presented in order. Thereby the construction of the vignettes falls somewhere between the extremes of Humphreys' and Watson's (2009: 43) continuum of ethnographic writing which ranges from minimally manipulated to highly manipulated, fictionalised accounts. The exception to this is excerpts from the interview transcripts which are presented verbatim. As such, footnotes are utilised to provide explanation where it is felt that verbal contractions, specifically elision, and colloquial expressions may not be understood by the reader. Overall, the writing aims to put the reader in touch with the informant's lived experience, enabling their stories to be heard and treated ethically.

3.8. Research Ethics

While this section explicitly focuses on ethical considerations and processes followed in the research, it should be noted that ethics have also been discussed at the relevant points throughout this chapter, such as the

consideration of observation as a different form of looking to surveillance (section 3.6.) and researcher positionality (section 3.7.3.). While ethics are important to all research, the specific context and subject of this research emphasised the need treat the informants with dignity, particularly as they are considered marginalised and some claims are made that they are potentially being subjected to unethical treatment by the Jobcentre. The researcher therefore sought to avoid similar treatment by not finalising the character of the informants. Thereby, the stories focus more on the informants right to say who they are and to refute the identities others impose them.

It is recognised that there are two broad ethical frameworks that influence ethical research perspectives: deontological ethics and consequentialist, or utilitarian ethics, although the lines between these are blurred (Mauthner, Birch, Jessop & Miller, 2002: 6). Merleau-Ponty's (1964b: 131) notion of, 'a life which is not unliveable for the greatest number' could be seen to align most closely with the latter, utilitarian perspective which seeks a similar outcome. Ethical codes, however, tend to be more general and share common features such as avoiding doing harm, facilitating informed consent with the right to withdraw, and protecting participant identity. While Mauthner et al. (2002: 3-5) emphasise that ethics in qualitative research are based on researcher skill to deal with ethical dilemmas, rather than following, 'abstract rules' or tick box exercises, codes of ethics can be seen to form the basic requirements of ethical treatment. It was outlined in the Introduction Chapter that this research most closely aligns with existing sociological studies of unemployment and as such, the Statement of Practice of the British Sociological Association (BSA) (2017: 4) outlines that researchers, 'have a responsibility both to safeguard the proper interests of those involved in or affected by their work, and to share their analyses/report their findings accurately and truthfully.' The Statement also emphasises the importance of trust and integrity in research relations and that this may require negotiation over time, particularly as extended periods of fieldwork may mean the informants forget they are being studied (*ibid*.: 5). As outlined in section 3.6.2.3., building rapport and trust with the informants was an ongoing process. Part of this was ensuring that my presence as researcher, and researching, was always overt (see section 3.6.1.3.), although this was

more straightforward given the observation was non-participatory. The process of informed consent and right to withdraw is outlined in the following section.

3.8.1. Informed Consent

The research design fully complied with University ethical requirements and procedures and was approved by an internal ethical research committee prior to commencement of the research. This included approval of the process of receiving individual informed consent. Each informant was taken through the Individual Consent Form attached at Appendix 2, step by step to ensure they understood the research process, aims and outcomes, before being asked to sign to provide their consent. This was in addition to the ongoing negotiations described. The notion of choice was particularly important as it is not always associated with jobseeking and claiming welfare and therefore it had to be made clear to the informants that it was their choice whether to take part. All informants were also provided with a General Information sheet (Appendix 3) including researcher contact details in case they wished to exercise their right to withdraw at any stage. Those informants who completed the participatory visual research were also given consent forms for anyone they decided to feature in their photographs (Appendix 4). Although only a small number of the photographs clearly showed other people, a consent form was only received from one of the people featured. No people can be seen in the photographs included in the following chapter. While no incentive was provided for taking part in the participatory visual research, the informants who completed it received a set of prints and the framed photographs which had been displayed at the art gallery.

While the informants thereby provided informed consent, preventing harm extends beyond the field, and the researcher retains responsibility to ensure the lives of the informants are represented ethically. The informants may not understand the potential impact of what they say being communicated outside the field setting, and therefore the researcher needs to take steps to prevent any negative outcomes. Although it is a remote possibility, the men could potentially be disciplined or sanctioned by the Jobcentre, or there may be disagreement regarding the Case Workers' approach. Therefore, the identity of

the informants has been disguised through the use of pseudonyms for both people and places, and through the adjustment of aspects of their identities. The informants did exercise choices regarding participation and the extent to which they revealed information, such as choosing not to undertake the participatory visual research, not directly answering certain questions, modifying answers and asking to move onto the next question. Those who completed the visual research were asked not to include photographs of anything they would not want the researcher to see. Aspects of the research were negotiated in situ, such as the discussions regarding whether the men are *'working class'* (FN 565, 612). As this label was refuted by Smithy in particular, it is not used to define them.

3.9. Limitations, Delimitations and Assumptions

As with any research study, particular choices and assumptions made by the researcher mean that it has some limitations. From a qualitative perspective a key limitation is that it has not been possible to include the full richness and depth of the experiential material in this thesis for reasons of space. While those stories which best represent the phenomenon have been selected, it is inevitable that the reader will not have as broad an understanding as the researcher. The nature of lived experience is that it is complex, ambiguous and unfinalisable, and as such, some simplifications have to be made in order to present it in a way which is understandable to the reader. In some cases, material had to be excluded because it risks specifically identifying the people or place. While this is clearly the most important consideration, it does mean that some details, such as past studies which reference this specific area, cannot be referenced. This chapter has sought to establish trust in the procedures adopted throughout this research so that the reader understands the decisions made are based on extensive researcher knowledge.

Ethnographic approaches have weaknesses when viewed from a quantitative perspective. In particular, quantitative studies seek generalisability of results, which is not possible with the small number of people this study focussed on. It is worthwhile noting that the whole population of older unemployed men within this particular area is too small to achieve a statistically representative sample without involving the whole population or extending the research. Thus, the

choice to research older, long-term unemployed men is a delimitation that provided focus, but also reduced the number of potential informants. In order to increase this population size, it would be necessary to change the whole nature of the research. Ethnography is very time intensive and increasing the number of people or sites would have been unmanageable for a single researcher in the time available. Neither can this study demonstrate the quantitative requirements of reliability or replicability, and nor does it seek to, because experience is understood as unique to each moment and thus that exact moment cannot be repeated. This research is, however, able to demonstrate validity from a qualitative perspective through the richness of the experiential material presented and by demonstrating researcher credibility, such as through self-reflexivity and the connections made between the stories presented and the theory.

That this study is bound to its context of a particular time and place is emphasised by the ongoing global pandemic and the impact it has had on unemployment and the delivery of welfare services. To a certain extent, increases in short-term unemployment and economic inactivity have little effect on long-term unemployment, which remains relatively stable. However, face to face services such as Work Club ceased and potentially will not return, particularly for the men as there were discussions while this ethnography was undertaken that it may be unnecessary for them to attend in future. Therefore, while this research can provide little insight into long-term unemployment during the pandemic, it is a situation which was problematised long before the pandemic. It can only be hoped that the current situation will provide greater social and institutional understanding of unemployment as a structural problem than was evident in this research.

Several assumptions have been discussed throughout this chapter, specifically the nature of experience as embodied, and thus that neither the researcher nor the informants can act as detached from the world. Researcher position and presence has been acknowledged in section 3.7.3. ‘Self-reflexivity and Positionality’, although it has been minimised in the presentation of the stories in the following chapter in order to ensure the focus is on the informants and their lived experience. Additionally, the nature of truth discussed in sections

3.3.4. and 3.7.1. means that the informant's statements have been taken at face value as purposeful, and representative of a dialogue between different orders of truth. Considering each of the stories separately, in addition to within a broader theoretical concept such as social death, enables the rigour of this research to be demonstrated.

3.10. Conclusion

This chapter has explained in full how adopting an ethnographic approach enabled the researcher to get close to the lived experiences of older, long-term unemployed men in order to respond to the phenomenological research questions. In particular, the men's experiences of surveillance emphasised the need to continually negotiate a relationship of trust and ensure that the experiential material is treated ethically on an ongoing basis. This aligns with Frank's (2012: 37) notion of responsibility inherent in retelling stories in order to increase the possibility that others will hear those stories and respond to them ethically. As dialogical narrative analysis recognises stories as purposeful, stories are often a plea to be heard, to be seen and to be acknowledged as being there. To support this, in line with ethnographic convention, an interpretation of the informant's interpretation of their experience is provided. The process outlined in this chapter supports the credibility, validity and ethicality of that interpretation, recognising that it emerges from a position which is influenced by the researcher's characteristics as well as philosophical and methodological commitments. However, through the following chapter, 'Stories About Unemployment', the reader is invited to get to know the informants and to see from the perspective of their lived experience.

4.0. Chapter 4: Stories About Unemployment

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to respond to the phenomenological questions outlined in the Introduction Chapter (section 1.5.) and explained in the Methodology Chapter (section 3.3.3.). The interpretation used in formulating these responses is closely aligned with the literature and illustrated with vignettes extracted from the ethnographic field notes and interview transcriptions, as well as shorter stories and snippets of talk. Vignettes focus on the stories the researcher felt needed to be told (Frank, 2012: 43), based on the knowledge gained of the informants and their lives through undertaking the ethnography and as such have been selected to allude to aspects of the men's lived experiences.

The chapter is structured according to the three research questions. This not only demonstrates how the experiential material speaks to each question, but that the structure itself is also dialogical. Firstly, in responding to the question, '*How do older long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?',* the men's stories of their interactions within the institutional walls of the Jobcentre are discussed. This draws on areas familiar in existing unemployment research, particularly governmentality, including contractual responsibility, homogenisation and individualisation of unemployed people. Digital surveillance in particular raises issues of suspicion and trust which contrast with the men's preference for face-to-face relations in which they can be certain of a response, whether positive or negative. Relating this to the potential for reciprocity in Merleau-Ponty's thesis of reversibility, the men have no reciprocal relationship with employers given that the majority of the large numbers of job applications submitted by the men receive either automated responses or no response at all. In summary, the men's interaction with the Jobcentre, as a welfare state institution, is very one sided and thereby provides little opportunity to engage in reciprocal, and thus ethical, relations.

Section 4.3. focuses on the response to the second research question, '*What is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?*' Metaphors of animals, meat, death and scum are used by the men in describing their experience of being unemployed, all of which relate to how others view them or

treat them, are used to examine how their interactions with those implemented welfare policy via the Jobcentre, and with wider society are felt bodily. This is evoked through the men's own stories related to these metaphors. Thus, to be treated as an animal is aligned with the attempt to ensure docility and increase utility (Foucault, 1991; 137), which if not achieved makes the life defined as inhuman and "killable", and thus alludes to the metaphor of meat. This leads into the metaphor of death, with the Case Workers parodied as body snatchers who dig up the corpses of the long-term unemployed in order to sell them for profit (FN 437, FN 536). However, the death metaphor also allows the consideration of how long-term unemployment can both bring an individual closer to their physical death, as well providing the opportunity for control over one's own death through a form of reciprocity that ensures a celebration of their life. The final metaphor of scum is aligned with Douglas' (1984; 5-6) notion of dirt being related to classifying dualisms of order/disorder, being/non-being and life/death. Each of these metaphors allows the recognition of painful suffering that is not reflected in the monoglossia of the dominant discourse of unemployment.

The final question is '*How do older long-term unemployed men live through this experience?*' While the men's use of the carnivalesque is referred to throughout the response to the first two questions, section 4.4 considers in more detail how the men use 'fun' to laugh at, mock and temporarily destroy hierarchy they are placed at the bottom of. The men's term, '*fun*' (e.g. FN 356, 668, Smithy's interview p3), which is likened to the carnivalesque, echoes through their historic relations to local industry and employment. As a relational survival strategy, it affirms subjectivity through the reciprocity of affecting and being affected by. Outside the institutional walls, the men are able to bring themselves into dialogue with the monologic perspective, transforming it into heteroglossia, and enabling a reciprocal, ethical response to the treatment outlined in the previous sections. Carnivalesque parody is explored as a particular device used to reverse the hierarchical power relation between Case Workers and men. Although this is only momentary, the section finishes by considering how the Case Workers themselves begin to question the monologic perspective.

4.1.1. Informants

Although the chapter is structured by the three questions it should be noted that lived experience cannot be so easily compartmentalised, it being complex, as well as at times contradictory and ambiguous. The metaphor of death links to the feeling that one has been, 'totally finalised' (Bakhtin, 1984: 69) and therefore the aim of this chapter is to refute this by letting the informants have the last word about themselves, supported by the use of dialogical narrative analysis. However, in order to aid understanding of their lives, each informant is briefly introduced below with details from the field notes about what they themselves and others say about them, as well as researcher perceptions from undertaking the ethnography. It should be noted that, throughout the chapter, all names are pseudonyms, including places such as the estate, street names and other locations, which have either been changed or removed. Some of the following details have been slightly amended and, in some cases, moved between the informants to ensure that the disguising of identity extends beyond a pseudonym.

Debbie and Steph, the two Case Workers who supervise the weekly Work Club, have both worked with unemployed people for some time. They are good friends as well as colleagues. As with all the men at Work Club, both Debbie and Steph grew up in, and are knowledgeable about, the local area. However, unlike the men, they have since moved out of the immediate vicinity.

Over two decades ago, on the day before Christmas Eve, Bob was made redundant from his supervisor role in a factory processing sausage casings. Although he was called back temporarily, the factory eventually moved to another part of the country and he has been unemployed ever since. He has never learned to drive and sees this as a significant barrier to work (FN 289). Now in his early 60s, he believes he is too old to learn.

Simon is often late to Work Club or doesn't turn up, and when he is there, he sits away from the other attendees, who complain that he is being exempted from the same requirements as them. Simon is approaching retirement age and has been unemployed since he was briefly in prison in the 1990s relating

to domestic violence. After he's been warned about his attendance he starts to dress more smartly and chat more with the others (FN 342).

Smithy turned 50 during the ethnography, and despite having worked on community schemes when he was younger, Steph defines his length of unemployment as '49 years' (FN 266). He still receives an allowance from his Mam and completes handy jobs for friends, seeing low pay as a barrier to gaining work. He also often checks in on his older neighbour but was prevented from officially become becoming his carer and receiving carer's allowance

Although all the men at Work Club have known each other a significant length of time, Greg attended the same community schemes as Smithy in the past. He is looking for work in IT or accountancy and joined Work Club part way through the ethnography. Greg walks with a stick and has a recurring problem with a strangulated hernia which he says previously nearly killed him. One day he lifts up his shirt to show us the scar which extends from his sternum to his bellybutton, with a large new hernia to the side of this. However, he insists that he doesn't want to 'go on the sick' because he doesn't want his benefit to change (FN 321).

Brian attended Work Club only sporadically. He has a recent criminal conviction which causes a barrier for him and the Case Workers believe Work Club is not suitable for him due to mental health issues. Debbie says that he likes to ring up employers and tell them what's wrong with their job adverts and fill in application forms incorrectly (FN 329).

Doug attends Work Club fortnightly. He has the shortest length of unemployment of all the men, this being four years, and he explains he lost his previous job because the wood yard where he worked replaced all the workers with younger ones who were 'half the price' (FN 165). Doug has ten children and many more grandchildren, who he talks about a lot. He's proud that they continue working when he can't, and he expresses dismay when one of his daughters is made redundant (FN 557).

Terry is the quietest at Work Club, and when ask how long he has been unemployed says, ‘you don’t wanna know’ (FN 710). He used to be a warehouse supervisor before he was made redundant and is looking for a similar type of role. He plays an active role in looking after his grandchildren who have nicknamed him ‘grandad sweets’ because he always brings them treats when he picks them up from school (FN 54).

4.2. Research Question 1: *How do older long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?*

The following section outlines how the men’s stories about their interactions with Jobcentre workers and systems can be interpreted utilising the theories of Goffman and Foucault. In particular, Foucault’s notion of panoptical surveillance is reflected in both physical and digital relations. It is discussed how these practices both attempt to instil self-governance through creating procedures which are like work, and also how they finalise the character of the men as deviant.

While carnivalesque reversals of hierarchical power relations are most relevant to the third question, they are also evident in the men’s stories of their interactions with the Jobcentre and employers. This enables a contrast to be seen between the official seriousness of one-sided relations with the atmosphere at Work Club where the carnivalesque emerges. The men utilise the carnivalesque to ridicule the perceived hierarchy of jobs, to remove barriers to applying for particular roles and also to exercise choice in avoiding applying for others. A number of the stories emphasise the importance placed on face-to-face relations by the men and how this may align with emergence of the carnivalesque through, ‘free and familiar contact’ (Bakhtin, 1984a: 10), which is not enabled through the one-sided interactions the men typically experience. Thus, the men clearly recognise the governance practices they are being subjected to, with Work Club providing opportunities to analyse these and refute their ability to affect them.

4.2.1. Surveillance Inside the Institution

The first two vignettes are stories told by the informants at Work Club about their recent experiences at the Jobcentre, prompting a discussion between the men and their Case Workers about the practices they are subjected to. The Jobcentre encounters described occur when the men have been to "sign on", which is normally a weekly requirement in which they must prove eligibility for their welfare benefit by providing evidence that they have met the conditions set out in their claimant contract.

The Jobcentre experiences described by the men align with those of a "total institution" (Goffman, 1957) as, although they are not confined to remain there, they are subjected to strict control of space and time, 'mortification' (*ibid*.) or identity stripping, and overt surveillance. These practices appear to finalise the men as deviant, with the potential to cause disorder, lie and cheat the system. The men are both homogenised by being viewed from this singular, monologic perspective, and individualised through their separation in space and time. That the men are not known by their Advisor or other Jobcentre staff means there is no opportunity for an ethical, reciprocal relation, as they are objectified as others, rather than treated as other selves with different circumstances and needs. This differs from the atmosphere at Work Club where these issues are discussed. At the Jobcentre complaints are not heard, whereas at Work Club the men receive some sympathy from their Case Workers regarding their situation:

> **V1: 'Time and Motion' (Terry)**
> Smithy compares being at Work Club to being, 'like The Dole'. 'Not really' interjects Steph. Smithy, appearing to agree, says that the Dole has, 'more security guards.' Bob asks why The Dole has a security guard with a clicker going round counting people. As he describes this, he makes the motion of pressing a clicker with his right hand. Terry thinks it's so that they can count people in and out and, 'see how many people go upstairs.' Bob shakes his head in disgust at such treatment. Terry thinks the security guard using the clicker is subjecting them to, 'time and motion'. 'That's what I said' insists Bob, who then asks, 'how come they've banned lads taking bottles up, but women get straight up?' 'The women are rougher than the men!' jokes Smithy. 'And that's just the staff' Terry quickly adds. Bob says that he saw a lad complaining about the bottle rule because it was a hot day and he wanted to be able to take some water upstairs to drink, but he wasn't allowed. Steph explains that they've now put a sign up at the Jobcentre which states, "No Waiting", which she thinks is awful. This prompts Smithy to talk

> about the time he arrived at The Dole at his appointment time yet was told he was early. Thankfully it was someone nice who checked his appointment and told him, 'Eeeeh your appointment is 12.10 but I've written 11.40 on the card!'. Smithy relays the Advisor's voice in a silly laughing tone. Returning to his own, somewhat annoyed voice, Smithy says it's a good job he got to speak to a nice one, but it's not his fault he would have to wait. As waiting is not allowed in the Jobcentre he was told he would have to leave and come back at his actual appointment time. 'The young 'uns are worse' says Bob, adding that if all the Advisors were like Smithy's they would, 'get more respect'. Bob then states that the younger Advisors, 'treat you like animals.'
>
> (FN 618-619)

Although the conversation in this vignette begins with Smithy comparing Work Club to the Jobcentre, the ensuing discussion leads to the general agreement that the rules are more strictly enforced in the Jobcentre (no waiting, no taking bottles upstairs). The men's use of the word '*Dole*', contrasts with the Case Workers' use of the official title, '*Jobcentre*'; with '*Dole*' referring to the original purpose of welfare as a relief payment (Robinson, 1936: 226) now replaced by contractual obligations. Use of this older term alludes to the sedimentation of language which resists the current official monoglossia. This monologic perspective is reflected in how they describe they are treated. The watchful security guard and the strict rules that are enforced imply a suspicion of unemployed people, described as being applied to men in particular, indicating that they are potentially criminal and thereby in need of the control exerted. This perspective on unemployed people within the Jobcentre, that they are, in local terms, *'rough'*, is resisted by Smithy and Terry through humour by switching this label onto female unemployed (*'The women are rougher than the men!'*), and then Jobcentre employees (*'And that's just the staff!'*). According to Bakhtin's (1984a: 82) theory of carnivalesque, these can be considered hierarchical reversals. The men consider women to receive more lenient treatment (*'they've banned lads taking bottles up, but women get straight up'*) and therefore they subordinate women by defining them as *'rougher'* than themselves. Jobcentre Advisors, whose rules they must follow even if they appear unethical, unequal or change at the last minute, are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy by defining them as even worse than the female unemployed.

The hierarchy which is momentarily switched through the men's carnivalesque humour is a power relation that is enforced through both time and space within the Jobcentre. Institutional time is defined as being more important than Smithy's time, given that he is made to wait outside when the Jobcentre Advisor had made an error in writing down his appointment time. The presence and gaze of the security guard, and their control of how unemployed people are allowed to move in the space through the enforcement of rules (counting, upstairs access, no waiting) ensures that all present are visible and subjected to hierarchical surveillance that normalises this treatment (Foucault, 1975/1991: 171-172). Together, this spatial and temporal control is interpreted by Terry in a capitalistic sense as, *'time and motion'*. This reference to a system of extreme control of time and the body in order to ensure efficiency, attributed to Frederick Taylor's "scientific management", aligns with Dean's (1995: 574) description of the 'Taylorization [sic]' of unemployment activities. The enforcement of these Tayloristic practices ensures not only a prescriptive form of control, but also the instilling of work-like structures and norms that the unemployed are viewed as lacking. Thus, it can be seen as aligning with both aspects of Foucault's theory of governmentality, by governing behaviour directly and also aiming to teach the governance of the self. It also demonstrates the persistence of Jahoda's (1982) theory of latent deprivation which posits the lack of work-like structure as a cause of the negative effects of unemployment, and thereby is a justification underpinning these practices.

Temporal and spatial control also reinforces the existing system by both making it appear necessary to prevent resistance against it and guaranteeing the order necessary for the institution to operate effectively. Rules such as *'No Waiting'* inside the building ensure that the potential for collective disorder is avoided by individualising and processing clients separately. These are techniques outlined by Foucault (1975/1991: 200) in his analysis of the panopticon, in which visibility, as well as the prevention of any form of mass gathering or communication, ensure disruptions to institutional practice are minimised. While it is obvious to the men that they are being subjected to an extreme and overt form of control, there is little opportunity to question or resist these practices while they are inside the walls of the institution. For example, complaints about not being allowed to take a bottle upstairs are ignored and

Smithy knows that he must wait outside, even though he has a *'nice'* Advisor. The purpose of the men attending the Jobcentre is to prove eligibility for their welfare benefit payment and they are therefore fully aware that any deviation from that which is prescribed risks this payment being withdrawn through sanction. Bob's comment about young Advisors being the worst for treating them poorly and without respect alludes to the entrenchment and institutional inertia surrounding the current monologic perspective as younger Advisors are likely to have limited knowledge and experience of alternative welfare policy.

However, returning to Smithy and Steph's comparison of Work Club to the Dole, the questioning of welfare practices is not only allowable at Work Club but Steph, whose role assigns responsibility for implementing welfare reform policy, also joins in when she declares that the *'No Waiting'* sign is, *'awful'*. In line with Bakhtin's (1981: 273) notion of a, 'dialogized [sic] heteroglossia', other voices and perspectives examine and refute the monologic view of unemployed people enforced by practices within the Jobcentre. This includes Smithy's appropriation of the voice of the Jobcentre Advisor which he parodies as high-pitched and silly, emphasising that they did not know what they were doing. The men are able to avoid the finalisation of their character through the sensemaking process of sharing their experiences, not only with other unemployed people who know them and share similar characteristics, but with the Case Workers. That the Work Club Case Workers are able to affirm the men's perspective is perhaps even more meaningful given their official position and what it represents. This breaks down the strict demarcation between compliance and non-compliance that is enforced within the institutional walls, allowing the questioning of Jobcentre practices even as they are undertaking job search activities in order to comply with those requirements. This switching of perspectives undertaken by the Case Workers, as well as bodily control and reversal, are also reflected in the following vignette:

> **V2: Who Signed You On?**
> 'Who signed you on?' Terry asks Bob. Terry says that there was Advisor at the Jobcentre and everyone there, 'could hear everything she was asking'. He explains that the Advisor was dealing with a 'kid' who was told that he had to sign between the lines, but in order to do so he had to awkwardly lean over a high partition at full arms-length. Terry demonstrates this by leaning right over behind the computer on the desk in front of him and twisting his body round towards the left. He says that

> when the kid told the Advisor he had trouble doing this, she just said bluntly, ‘you have to sign’. Terry was then asked by his Advisor, 'got your job search?' and he showed her his paper records. He was then asked two security questions, after which he was asked again by the same Advisor, ‘got your job search?’. Terry had responded, ‘I showed you’, and the Advisor retorted, ‘no you didn’t’. Terry demonstrates how he then stood back up and went to take his paper records out of his right-hand pocket again, at which point the Advisor laughed and said, ‘oh yeh, you did’. Terry rolls his eyes. Bob says that he was told, 'you need to change your password because I can't get into your account'. Bob has also been instructed to take his ID every time he goes to the Jobcentre. Debbie seems a bit taken aback by this, expressing that she has, ‘not been told’. She then adds that sometimes they do spot checks. Bob was worried about his bank card that he took to use as ID because an Advisor took it and walked away from him, and then, ‘kept hold’ of it. Debbie replies that another of her clients was, ‘having a whinge about that’ as well. They then discuss the security questions the unemployed are asked at the Jobcentre. 'Shocking aren't they' says Debbie. ‘How dare they' she adds in a disgusted tone. Smithy says that he's going to ask the Advisors in return, 'I want to know who you are.’ ‘They do it to me’ he says, so, ‘I can do it to them.'
>
> (FN 496, 527, 798).

The further experiences of being processed within the Jobcentre that are outlined in this vignette underline the men’s experience of depersonalisation in which their existing identity is questioned and removed. Goffman (1957: 49-50) described this process as, ‘mortification’, which was linked by Sweeting and Gilhooly (1991; 257) to the concept of social death (see section 4.3). The men must constantly identify themselves and prove who they are, which functions according to the notion of *‘security’* (security questions, needing to take ID) which is normalised through its repetition, as they are told that each time they go to the Jobcentre they must identify themselves. Yet, Bob’s ability to identify himself according to these standards is removed when his bank card is taken away and he must ask a number of times for this to be returned. While Debbie is generally supportive and expresses shock at this treatment, she also justifies it as *‘spot checks’* and minimises complaining about this as, *‘having a whinge’*. This normalises the careless treatment of the men’s information while they are at the Jobcentre, represented by being able to overhear Advisors, Terry being told he hadn’t shown his record and keeping hold of Bob’s identification, underpinned by the assumption that the men, as unemployed people, are non-compliant and thus are to be treated with suspicion. In a form of reversibility,

the men likewise express suspicion of what their information is being used for, including the bank card and Bob being asked to change his password.
Both vignettes (V1 and V2) show how the men use their bodies to demonstrate actions they have observed, such as Bob making the clicking movement with his hand (V1) and Terry leaning over the desk (V2), as well as placing their bodies in positions they have previously experienced themselves, as when Terry stands up to demonstrate taking something out of his pocket (V2). This indicates memories held in the body which can more easily be recalled when the body is placed in the same position (Dijkstra, Kaschak & Zwaan, 2007). Similarly, these actions represent attempts to exert control over the bodies of unemployed welfare benefit claimants by requiring them to place their bodies in certain positions, to repeat their movements and ensuring certain bodies are in certain places (or not) at certain times. The latter, through counting, is one of the forms of information gathering which transforms unemployed people from individual bodies into statistics. They are also asked unnecessarily invasive questions, which Debbie agrees are, *'shocking'* (see also V12). Information gathering underpins the application of Foucault's notion of biopower by producing statistics that justify intervention by finalising the characteristics of the population. This clearly induces affects in the informants, who in these vignettes display emotions such as anger, dismay and disgust. That this is directed at the system rather than themselves emphasises the failure to induce self-governance, particularly through the threat of punitive policies like sanctions. The men appear largely resigned to their unfair application, expressing suspicion that random targets are set for a number of sanctions to be given each month, yet Smithy refutes their ability to affect him when elsewhere he states bluntly that he is, *'not bothered, if you get sanctioned, you get sanctioned.'* (FN 417).

The seemingly one-way nature of this power relation is emphasised by Smithy's attempt to reverse the information gathering practices back onto Jobcentre workers when he claims at the end of the vignette, *'I can do it to them'*. However, that this appears ineffective is due to the absence of laughter, and thus it is not a carnivalesque reversal, which Bakhtin (1984a: 12) emphasised must be felt by everyone in order to, 'escape…the usual way of life' (*ibid*., 8). In both the vignettes, the Advisors laugh (Smithy relays the

Advisor's voice in a silly laughing tone, the Advisor laughed and said, 'oh yeh, you did'), but this laughter is not shared by Smithy and Terry and is therefore singular and nonreciprocal. Reciprocity, as a choice to enter into a two-way ethical relation (Johnson, 2008), is also absent from other areas of the men's lives, particularly due to the digitalisation of job application processes. Such disembodied approaches do not align with embodied face-to-face contact the men prefer, which is significantly related to the form of relations the men developed living in a place where industrial manual labour is a feature of local life.

4.2.2. Free and Familiar Contact

The men expressed suspicion of how they are subjected to surveillance via online job search platforms, as well as stating a preference for face-to-face interaction in which they can be certain of a response, whether positive or negative. This aligns with recent recognition that those with a precarious relation to the labour market are most disadvantaged by digitisation (Sheen, 2020) and that online text focussed job applications do not align with the embodied preferences of people seeking manual work (Gist-Mackay, 2018). It is not that the men can't use digital platforms, but that they see them as only suitable for certain things and are particularly critical of using social media for private matters or instead of face-to-face contact (FN 208, 483, 509). This is reflected in the men's confusion regarding what employers are looking for via online applications and how they meet these requirements. For example, when Smithy is told by an employer to update his CV he complains that he can't understand why because, *'they're the ones who want it'* (FN 603), and Bob becomes overwhelmed by the options of applying for jobs using social media such as Facebook and Linkedin (FN 405). Thus, it is not as simple as lacking skills, which the Case Workers believe the men have, stating, for example, '*learning to cut and paste changed Bob's life*' (FN 216). Many of the online processes simply do not make sense to the men, because they value face-to-face relations, such as those they had previously with local industries (see section 4.4.1.) and thus express more enthusiasm for handing out paper CVs to local employers (FN 26, 749). The men's opinions about digital relations as compared to the face-to-face relations they prefer are perhaps best explained by Smithy in his interview, as outlined in the following vignette:

V3. 'People say 'oh the internet, it's a brilliant thing'. It's not.' (Smithy)

Smithy: Oh, aye, you weren't brought up, you were dragged up. Used to rob the rag man so y'had y'school clothes. They used t'have, they knocked that doon[6] an' everybody just dispersed. An' like y'didn't have that community anymore. People that were there were strangers. People were strangers, when you went in y'were thinking, cos everybody knew, wherever you went, y'didn't have t'worry about y'kids because y'knew somebody who would look after y'bairn[7]…An' if owt happened, they would be there. Nowadays [pause], y'haven't got it anymore. Nowadays they divn't even fight face-to-face, they dee it ower[8] Facebook…It's all wrong. People say, 'oh the internet, it's a brilliant thing'. It's not. It's just took bullying indoors. That's all it's done. An' y'see these bairns, eight-year-old getting bullied. They're not even deeing nowt, they're sitting in their own ken[9] on a computer…An' the next thing y'kna, they've killed theselves ower some little idiot who hasn't got no backbone t'come face-to-face. So. I don't agree with all that kind o'malarky with all this thing saying, 'aw it's brilliant y'get this, y'get t'kna that'. Aye, I bet. If y'look in the dark corners of it, it causes a lot of damage an' all.

(Smithy's interview p14)

Here, Smithy appropriates the official voice that tells them, *'oh the internet, it's a brilliant thing'* and brings this into dialogue with his perspective on things which have been lost, such as community due to housing being knocked down and replaced with tower blocks *('y'didn't have that community anymore'*), looking after each other (*'somebody who would look after y'bairn* [child]') and resolving conflict (*'they divn't* [don't] *even fight face-to-face'*). Although Smithy acknowledges these times were hard (*'you were dragged up'*), collective support made this easier. Smithy's comparison of conflict best resolved face-to-face can also be linked to carnivalesque, which operates according to the principle of, 'free and familiar contact' (Bakhtin, 2984a: 10) which takes place both publicly and physically as the downward movement of blows, beatings and mockery are regenerating. This form of expression is the only means by which life can be classed as authentic (Bakhtin, 1981; 240), as opposed to private,

[6] Doon is a local pronunciation of down

[7] Bairn is a colloquial term for a child.

[8] 'ower' is a local pronunciation of 'over', rhyming with 'sour'

[9] Ken is a colloquial term meaning knowledge or understanding.

individual life. As digitisation has reduced or removed opportunities for this familiar contact, the men may see some forms of online and virtual contact as inauthentic. This feeling is compounded by the men's suspicion that they are being subjected to surveillance via online job searching platforms.

4.2.3. Surveillance Outside the Institution

According to Foucault's (1975/1991: 211) notion of, '*The swarming of disciplinary mechanisms*' (italics in original), surveillance moved outside total institutions and into private spaces such as the home in order to gather information for the purposes of normalisation. However, the operation of power outside institutional walls in much less visible. As was outlined in the first two vignettes, at the Jobcentre the men clearly see themselves being seen, with Bob commenting that the, *'security guards know everyone's business'* (FN 769). However, their use of web-based job search and application tools dissociates the 'see/being seen dyad' (Foucault, 1975/1991: 201-202) such that the men cannot see whether they are being subjected to surveillance or not, with online job search tools representing 'a digital panopticon' (Wright & Fletcher, 2018: 332). During the period of the ethnography, the Jobcentre phased out Universal Jobsmatch and replaced it with a new system called 'Find a Job'. The Case Workers reminded the men numerous times to use this site instead of non-contracted search engines, prompting several discussions about whether the Jobcentre were using these systems to remotely access their online activity. For example, Terry claimed that he received a notification saying his information had been checked, despite him not ticking the box to give his permission for such checks to be undertaken (FN 348). While Debbie refuted that this was possible, she recommended that the men do give permission because it negates them needing to prove their job search by other means, such as paper records (*ibid.*). Despite this denial, the feeling amongst the men that the job search system is a tool of surveillance appeared to be later confirmed. When the new system was introduced, Debbie tells the men, *'this time the Jobcentre can't see'*, and when Doug claims, *'they can get in'*, Steph responds, *'not any more'* (FN 401, 411). Thereby, power may be invisible but can be recognised, felt, and thus understood. At other times, the disciplinary swarming is more overt, as the following vignette demonstrates:

V4. ‘If you’ve got nothing to hide why wouldn’t you?’ (Smithy)
Debbie and Steph have been hearing via meetings that there is a questionnaire for clients being brought in. They ream off some of the questions from the questionnaire which asks things such as, ‘Do you go to the dentist?’, ‘How often do you bathe?’, ‘How many children do you have?’ and ‘How many sleep per room?’, ‘Do the children go to school?’ and ‘Do you have a tv?’. The Case Workers wrinkle their noses and say that they don’t like the questions. Steph says it’s supposed to be confidential and that the clients are supposed to take the questionnaire again after six months to see if things have changed. When clients have been asking her why they have to complete the questionnaire, Debbie has given the reason as, ‘because I’ve asked you to’, which she says they accept because she knows them. One of the questions which Debbie thinks is really bad is, 'Do you take pride in your appearance?'. She describes the screen that shows the question, explaining that there’s two pictures side by side; one side shows a nice family and on the other side there's a picture of the comedy tv characters Wayne and Waynetta slob with their fat beer bellies hanging out. As she explains this, she mimes the shape of a large stomach with her hands, and then shakes her head and says, ‘it's prejudiced’. However, she says that people who smell and need a wash are saying they are fine in that regard because they don’t think anything is wrong. The Case Workers explain that they’re worried about running the questionnaire with the men, because some of the questions are quite personal, including about sexual health. However, when they tentatively raise it at Work Club it doesn’t seem to bother Smithy, who is indignant that he bathes, ‘every day’. ‘More like twice a year’ interjects Greg. Debbie explains that the purpose of the questionnaire is to help identify repeating patterns, such as rubbish in the area. ‘If you’ve got nothing to hide why wouldn’t you?’ Smithy asks. He then says that it’s not as bad as the questions they ask you if you go on the Community Task Force. His voice raises and he says that they ask you ‘have you ever been accused of tampering with a bairn?’, in response to this question he asks in his own voice, ‘who would hurt anyone?’. ‘You wouldn’t’ Debbie replies, ‘but you know plenty of people who would’.

(FN 329, 378, 391, 673)

The questionnaire mentioned by the Case Workers can be considered an example of Foucault’s notion of biopower in that it targets both the individual body (‘*Do you take pride in your appearance?*’) and the wider population (‘*the purpose of the questionnaire is to help identify repeating patterns*’) in order to produce statistical data that identifies targets for control and regulation. The questions regarding sleeping arrangements align closely with Foucault’s (1975/1991: 211) examples of disciplinary swarming. Although such information gathering purports to help people, for example, Debbie explaining the purpose as helping to identify problems in the local area so they can be resolved (to help identify repeating patterns, such as rubbish in the area), the

focus is really individual behaviour and whether it aligns with social norms. Thus, the questionnaire aims to normalise through inducing shame. This is evidenced by those who may need help not admitting to it via the questionnaire (people are saying they are fine), as although it is worded as questions, there is a clear socially correct answer, strengthened by the inclusion of the images. Most of the questions outlined relate directly to the body (teeth, washing, appearance, sexual health) and thereby are explicit attempts at the regulation of individual bodies. The impact of the questionnaire is that living in poverty is psychologised as a lifestyle choice, with no indication of consequences or support offered should the "wrong" answer be selected.

Smithy's reaction, indicating that only someone with something to hide would refuse to complete the questionnaire (*'If you've got nothing to hide, why wouldn't you?'*) is a response that aligns with a monologic perspective that finalises character. Thereby he alludes to the questionnaire being targeted at deviant "Others", which is supported by Debbie when she agrees that there are, *'plenty of people who would'* hurt others, thus justifying invasive questions. Smithy also appropriates the official voice when he adds a question he has previously been asked, *'have you ever been accused of tampering with a bairn* [child]*?*'. Clearly this is an important issue for those working with children and Smithy is keen to demonstrate that he has higher moral standards than this question implies. It also, however, alludes to the frequency with which they are asked such questions, to the extent that they are aware that if they do not respond, the answer will be assumed to be the worst because there must be something to hide.

To note, the Community Task Force (CTF) that Smithy refers to is a training scheme for young unemployed people aged between 18 and 25 years in which they complete, typically manual, work in exchange for training and an allowance. Given Smithy is 50 years old it is some time since he was eligible to be on this scheme, and according to Steph, this is the only time Smithy worked, although she does not consider this to be proper work (FN 266). Some of the other men also were on the same schemes with Smithy, specifically Greg, who Smithy still refers to as *'CTF-waller'* (FN 274). 'Waller' is slang for lazy and thus demonstrates how the men themselves can finalise the character of other

unemployed people according to the monologic perspective, despite being in a very similar situation. Such schemes are no longer open to the men due to their age, and they have had no success with similar schemes which are unpaid, although they still receive benefits. Simon attended a course offered by the local housing association which offered a guaranteed job interview on completion but was thrown out for wearing a hat (FN 461). Some of the men can't attend because they have criminal convictions or rent arrears. Greg and Terry refuse to attend anything due to previous bad experiences. Both Bob and Smithy have undertaken street cleaning and helped in charity shops via the Work Programme (FN 571). Although Smithy applied to join a furniture recycling scheme during the ethnographic research he was unsuccessful (FN 147, 258). Steph criticises these latter opportunities for taking advantage of unemployed people working for free (FN 170). Smithy's case in particular highlights the men's predicament when held to the requirement that they should, 'take any job as quickly as possible' (Egdell & McQuaid, 2016: 2), when they can't even obtain unpaid work. The follow vignettes further highlight this contradiction.

4.2.4. Any Job is Better Than no Job

At Work Club, the men are encouraged, and where necessary pushed, to apply for any job. This aligns with their responsibility under their welfare contract to actively seek work. While the men are able to occasionally decide not to apply for particular roles, such as in the following vignette, this is not really representative of exercising choice because, overall, they are compelled by the need to provide proof of their job search activity to prioritise volume of applications. As such, Bob will look through more than thirty-six pages of jobs in one Work Club session, applying for any cleaning or other similar low-level roles (FN 549), and Terry, who was made redundant from his job as a Warehouse Supervisor (FN 710) has already applied for nearly every warehousing job on the Total Jobs website (FN 182). Such roles often have non-standard working hours, for example, a cleaning role for two hours per week (FN 448) or beginning work at 4am (FN 72). That the men are convinced by the Case Workers to apply, or the Case Workers apply for them, for roles that they would otherwise consider inconvenient or unsuitable, aligns with Bartelheimer et al.'s (2012: 37) assertion that Activation fosters, 'a labour

supply for low-paid and non-standard employment.' The following excerpt is an example of how Debbie and Steph try to persuade the men to make such applications:

> **V5. 'Never mind ducking and diving!' (Steph)**
> Smithy is helping Doug with his job search. 'Never mind ducking and diving!' Steph tells him. Smithy explains that he's searched for labouring and gardening jobs but there weren't any. Steph leans over his computer and tells him to, 'try nothing', meaning he should empty the search box so that all available jobs come up. She points out a role for, 'Glass collector/cleaner'. 'What?' says Smithy in disbelief and Doug laughs. The job is in a pub called The Fighting Cocks. Bob, overhearing, asks Smithy if he's, 'got a gum shield?' Smithy explains that at The Fighting Cocks they search you for weapons at the door and, 'if you don't have one, they gi' you one.' When Steph then asks if Smithy fancies any of the jobs that came up on his search, he doesn't respond, leading her to conclude in despair, 'I think your mother would keel over if you told her you had a job'. Debbie then asks, 'Where's Simon? The Fighting Cocks are looking for staff.' Simon says that he's banned out of that pub. 'Why?' Debbie asks, at which Simon's face screws up. 'Not fighting?' continues Debbie, questioning whether Simon was banned, 'a few weeks ago?'. 'Not a few weeks ago' responds Simon bluntly. Debbie asks him who he was fighting with. 'Dunno' says Simon, adding, 'myself probably'. He then decides to explain that his mate was fighting and he had to pull him off the other bloke, leading to him getting banned along with his mate. Simon thinks that the pub is, 'snobby inside now'. Debbie says that she went in when it had just been done out. 'I don't believe you like' retorts Simon. 'I don't lie' says Debbie, indignantly. 'You're a woman, they all lie' Simon responds, to which Debbie then counters, 'I have to with you'. 'To save face' says Simon quickly. 'Stop talking' Debbie says forcefully, cutting off the argument then mumbling to herself, 'wish I hadn't said anything.'
>
> (FN 413, 461)

Both Smithy and Simon are able to utilise the carnivalesque to avoid applying for the role without outrightly disagreeing or verbalising their choice not to apply. Although it is not a universal laughter, the carnivalesque is evident in Doug's laughing mockery of Steph's suggestion. Bob and Smithy then join in with a short parody of what The Fighting Cocks is like, intimating that violence and fighting is encouraged. The theme of fighting, evident in both Smithy's and Simon's responses, represents a 'downward movement' (Bakhtin, 1984; 371) and is likewise used to debase Steph's suggestion in a shift that, 'throw[s] the adversary to the ground' (*ibid*.). As such, these movements lead to the temporary relief that carnivalesque and everyday resistance aims to achieve through the reversal of the power relation as Debbie and Steph give up on

encouraging them to apply for the Glass Collector job, with Debbie ending the discussion by telling Simon to, *'Stop talking'*.

As the dialogue descends into argument and insult and is thus ended by Debbie, its beginning, in which Smithy is accused of avoiding applying for jobs, is forgotten. Smithy, who is a qualified bricklayer and plasterer as well as having experience in gardening (Smithy's interview p6), is encouraged to look for "any job" when he cannot find something to match his skills and preference. This aligns with a focus on adjusting labour market supply, rather than demand. Thus, Smithy is encouraged to be, 'realistic' (Eversberg, 2016) in the roles he searches and applies for by lowering the expectation that he will be able to find anything at the level he previously worked at, which existing studies (Ranzijn et al., 2005; Ainsworth & Hardy, 2009) have found is a particular issue for the older long-term unemployed. This notion of "being realistic", or in other words applying only for low-level jobs, is also emphasised in the following two vignettes.

4.2.5. Realistic Goals

The type of roles the men apply for reveal a rough "hierarchy of jobs". As alluded to in the previous vignette, at the bottom of this hierarchy there are low-level, low-paid jobs that the Case Workers think are 'realistic' for the men. However, some, but not all, of these are dismissed by the men as, '*jobs that no one else really wants*' (FN 121). At the other end of the hierarchy are high-level jobs that require significant qualifications and/or experience. These are discounted by the men to the extent that they do not even '*see*' them, as outlined in the following vignette:

> **V6. 'Need quals to do them' (Doug)**
> Doug is looking on the Find a Job website. 'Still got nowt on these have they?' he comments. Steph stands over him, pointing at different items on the search list saying, 'There's a job, there's a job…'. 'Has Doug gone blind?' Debbie asks. 'Need quals to do them' Doug states bluntly regarding the jobs she has pointed out. 'What's your dream job?' Steph asks. 'No idea' says Doug.
> 'What's a dream job?' asks Greg, to which Debbie responds, 'That's what I like, realistic goals'. Greg then looks through a range of hospital jobs. 'I should become a nurse - I could do me own op!' he exclaims, then adds, 'Psychologist! I know all the ins and outs don't I?', then finally decides on, 'Gynaecologist!'. 'Bit hands on' comments Smithy. Greg,

> who continues to look at the hospital jobs then mumbles to himself, 'them surgeons are getting some money.'
> 'There's a role here for "Pregnancy Advisor"' pipes up Smithy. 'Here's a pack of condoms' quips Bob quickly. Bob is also looking at Find a Job. He keeps clicking on a role for Linen Room Assistant that he has already applied for. 'Rubbish' he exclaims, complaining that his job searching keeps coming up with roles like, 'Intelligence Analyst' and 'Sister/Practice Nurse'. 'I could do that' Smithy says. Bob disagrees, because for these jobs, 'you need an IQ'.
>
> (FN 239, 426, 526-527)

As noted in section 4.2.3., during the period of the ethnographic research the Jobcentre replaced the old job searching system with a new one called 'Find a Job'. The men complain that this new system doesn't have any jobs (*'Still got nowt on these have they?*'). However, as Steph notes, there are jobs on the system ('*There's a job, there's a job*') but they are ones that the men immediately discount as not being suitable for them. This is to the extent that they do not even "see" these roles (*'Has Doug gone blind?'*). In particular, these are roles which require qualifications (*'Need quals to do them'*) and intelligence (*'you need an IQ'*): things the men realise they do not possess, or at least in the way expected of such high-level roles. As noted of the working-class lads in Willis' (1983: 127-128) study, qualifications maintain those at the top already rather than proving the worth of those at the bottom. Like the lads, Smithy places high value on the *'real things'*, or practical skills such as driving, that he learned at school (FN 565) and thus this forms, in Merleau-Pontian (1962/2009) terms, their intentionality and habitual connection to the world. As a consequence, they view some jobs as open to them and others not. However, Smithy declares that, unlike Willis' (*ibid*.) lads, the men are not working-class since, as he states to the Case Workers, *'we don't work, that's you'* (FN 565). While Steph evokes the meritocratic ideal that they can aspire to escape this position by asking them about their, *'dream job'* (also asked FN 516), the men are commended by Debbie for being *'realistic'*.

However, although these jobs may be perceived by the men to be out of their reach, they are able to pull this hierarchy down through the use of the carnivalesque. This is achieved particularly by reference to the lower bodily stratum (*'Gynaecologist!'*, *'Bit hands on'*, *'Pregnancy Advisor'*, *'Here's a pack of condoms'*), whereby the stable hierarchy is ridiculed, materialised and

destroyed, and the necessity for social and historical change through rebirth (*'pregnancy'*) is realised (Bakhtin, 1984; 81-82). By creating a parody of themselves in these jobs (*'I should become a nurse'*, *'I could do that'*) and implying they are straightforward, practical roles (*'Here's a pack of condoms'*) they are able to change perspective in order to explore that which is not open to them, 'fearlessly and freely' (Bakhtin, 1981; 26). The formal, elevated world is unable to intimidate them, as it is made fun of and degraded, and ultimately destroyed through its creation as a carnivalesque parody. Thus, they are able to accept a lower hierarchical position, as outlined by Smithy's class denial, without feeling ashamed.

The hierarchy of jobs created by the men discussed thus far appears fairly logical, with low-level jobs that nobody wants at the bottom, and high-level jobs that are realistically out of their reach at the top. However, in between these two extremes are a range of jobs that the Case Workers do not necessarily consider *'realistic'*, but the men willingly apply for. They try on these roles in a similar manner to those at the top of the hierarchy, as outlined above, leading them to conclude that these "middle" roles are also straightforward and practical, and therefore could be easily undertaken. This is evident in the following vignette:

> **V7. 'It's as plain as day' (Simon)**
> Doug is applying for a job as a Horse-Riding Instructor. 'Can you ride?' Debbie asks him, to which his response is an indignant, 'yes'. Then Debbie asks, 'Can you instruct?'. 'Get on, don't fall off' he says simply. Doug says that he's also applied for the Army. Steph asks him if he got far in the application process and Doug says that he was told he's too old. He's also applied for the Navy and Air Force and was informed that they would employ older people in certain roles. He adds that he's put all of this on his job search record.
> 'Eeh, you apply for a wide range of things!' Debbie exclaims to Simon when she sees that he is applying for a role at a train station. 'Sitting in a train station telling people what to do, it's as plain as day' he responds. 'What else can I apply for?' asks Smithy, who is looking on a "Help Wanted" website. Steph says that there's 'quite a lot of care working' jobs available. 'I could be a care worker' responds Smithy confidently. Doug laughs and says that they're, 'looking for two Christmas elves at Alderidges Department Store. 'That's me an' thee sorted!' pipes up Smithy.
>
> (FN 213, 265, 325, 775)

The habitual strategies discussed above mean that there is a bodily 'I can' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009; 160), which is aligned with the notion of power as, 'to be able to' (Feder, 2013; 56). As the men see these jobs as straightforward, practical and not requiring much experience or formal qualifications *('Get on, don't fall off'*, *'it's as plain as day'*, *'I could be a care worker'*) they view themselves as easily being able to perform such work. Through a form of reversibility, the men can see themselves undertaking these roles, despite the Case Workers considering them out of their reach (*'Can you ride?'*, *'Can you instruct?'*). There are hints of the carnivalesque in Doug's laughter, reflected in Smithy's exclamation (*'That's me an' thee sorted!'*), and the grotesque downward movement in the reference to potentially falling (*'don't fall off'*). Thus, the jobs are materialised and turned into flesh (Bakhtin, 1984; 20), enabling the men to try them on.

Whether the men could undertake particular job roles is also a question answered by the Case Workers, sometimes in response to the men, or otherwise to encourage them to apply for roles. For example, Bob asks Debbie about a Room Attendant/Housekeeping job, *'Can I do that?...Tell the truth'* (FN 338). Another time, Debbie tells Smithy, *'You can do that'* when she sees a Community Fundraiser job (FN 754). This also involves an element of reversibility of perspective in which the Case Workers "see" the men in particular roles or support the men to do so themselves. This visual perspectival element is exemplified by Bob, who uses Google Maps and Google Street View to look at the locations of jobs he applies for. In one case, Debbie looks over his shoulder and, seeing that a factory where he is applying for work is next to a park, tells him that if he gets the job he can, *'go to the park for lunch'* (FN 654).

However, while the men, or their Case Workers, believe that they could undertake these jobs, the barriers that the carnivalesque helps to temporarily remove, remain in place. For example, Doug being told that he is *'too old'* to join the Army. Therefore, completing and submitting these applications becomes mainly for the purposes of fulfilling requirements to ensure the payment of their welfare benefit, such as when Doug informs Debbie and Steph that he has put all the applications he has made on his job search record, and Smithy asking, *'What else can I apply for?'*. Smithy also tells Steph that

completing more job applications will, *'keep you off my case'* (FN 239). Thus, quantity of job applications is prioritised over quality, and the majority of roles that the men apply for are low-level, such as cleaning, retail, hospitality, customer service and warehousing work (FN 165, 320, 770, 800). However, despite the volume of applications submitted, and the level of support received in submitting them, the men very rarely progress to the next stage of the recruitment process. As the Case Workers' measure of success is the number of clients who have progressed into jobs, the prioritisation of quantity of applications submitted fails in this respect. For example, in the whole period of the ethnographic research, none of the men are invited to a face-to-face interview for a paying role. Effectively the men cannot lower their expectations any further, with the nonreciprocal relation they have with employers leading them to conclude that they have little chance of re-employment. This is discussed in the following section.

4.2.6. Nonreciprocity with Employers

The men's earlier experiences of employers were of those they could see, hear and feel in their local community. This was a reciprocal relation in which they were both affected by and could affect local employment activity (see section 4.4.1.). This contrasts with their current nonreciprocal relation, in which they appear unable to affect employers through their submission of job applications, receiving only automated email responses in return. Again, the 'see/being seen dyad' (Foucault, 1991; 202) is dissociated as they are seen by employers, through their submitted CVs and application forms, yet are never able to see the employer or this process taking place. The men's preference for face-to-face relations and disdain for some forms of digitisation they consider unsuitable and potentially inauthentic (see section 4.2.2.), means they not only feel rejected by employers, but that this decision is made without truly knowing them. They are reduced to disembodied text, and thus objectified under the employer's gaze. The response received from others is able to either affirm or deny subjectivity, such that both Merleau-Ponty (1964: 68) and Bakhtin (1984b: 58, 69) likened the experience of being objectified and thus finalised as being akin to death. The high volume of applications the men are required to submit only increases the feeling amongst the men that they are unworthy of personal

acknowledgement, let alone an offer of an interview or job. This is explored through the following vignette:

> **V8. 'Anyone heard anything back?' (Debbie)**
> 'Anyone heard anything back?' Debbie asks loudly. Nobody says anything and Debbie grumbles, 'don't all shout at once'. She then asks Bob directly whether he has heard back about any of the jobs he has applied for. 'This is the email that you get now' Bob says gesturing at his computer in annoyance. On the screen is a response for a Shop Assistant application he made. The email is informing him that the recruitment process has moved on to the next stage but his application isn't progressing. The email has all the hallmarks of a standard, automated message, with no personal greeting and the text is contained in a central box. Simon has two emails about jobs and exclaims, 'I don't normally get replies, what's going on?' Steph takes a look at them and then has to explain to Simon that they are also just automated responses thanking him for applying. She asks him if he felt good about getting a response and she took that away from him.
> Smithy adds that he hasn't had any success either. 'Nowt come back' he says, 'just standard emails as per usual.' He says he's had 185 emails and 'it's all rubbish'. Steph asks him if he heard back from the window cleaning job. Smithy responds that he hasn't but at least they rang him, 'and that's better than getting a job'. 'That's not better than getting a job' Steph confirms dryly.
> 'Any answers?' Debbie asks Greg. 'Just unfortunatelys' he replies. Debbie encourages him to 'keep trying'. 'Oh, I'm very trying' Greg says sarcastically. Bob reads out an email he has received from an employer, thanking him for his application and wishing him luck, but the packer jobs advertised are no longer required. 'Why advertise then?' asks Terry, annoyed. Bob notes that the email is signed 'Sharon'. 'She just put Shaz on mine' Terry jokes. 'And a kiss' adds Steph. Terry says that Sharon is, 'playing hard to get'.
>
> (FN 214, 263, 335, 380, 423, 520, 539, 640)

The importance that the men attach to receiving a personalised, verbal response to their applications is particularly highlighted by Smithy who declares that it is, *'better than getting a job.'* Conversely, when automated responses are received the men see them as *'rubbish'*, expressing annoyance (Bob and Terry) and sarcasm (Greg). The affirmation the men seek resonates within the carnivalesque treatment of *'Sharon'*, the inclusion of whose name on the email indicates a real person behind the automated response. The apparent rejection of their application by the employer is torn down by imagining an individualised and flirtatious response (*'playing hard to get', 'She just put Shaz on mine'*, *'And a kiss'*). The threat of rejection is transformed into something that may make Terry momentarily feel attractive, thus in a Baktinian sense he is "gifted"

positive qualities (Sullivan, 2012: 3) and his subjectivity is affirmed (see Merleau-Ponty, 1964; 68).

However, being unable to engage in a real dialogue with employers, the men must infer the reason for the rejection of their application. One particular concern appears the be that they are perceived as being dishonest and untrustworthy. Greg's personal statement at the top of his CV begins by stating in large letters, '*I am honest and trustworthy*' (FN 315), while the first qualities that Smithy lists in an application form are that he is, *'honest, trustworthy…*' (FN 71). They may feel the employers' apparent silence is indicative of mistrust because, from their own perspective, they do not speak to people that they do not trust (*'if we didn't trust you, we wouldn't talk to you'* FN 579). It may also reflect their awareness of how unemployed people are stigmatised with negative character traits. By asserting that they are honest and trustworthy the men hope to be seen by employers as being of "good character" and compensate for the absence of reciprocity which is necessary for the employer to know the men in this way.

Unemployed people who are conceived as part of the "underclass" are typically accused of having a flawed character when they do not display what are perceived to be the correct attitude, behaviours and emotions (Goffman, 1963: 14; Taylor, 2018). In particular, linking to Steph's aspirational question about "dream jobs", unemployed people are seen to lack character traits such as future-focus, drive and ambition. The men are viewed by the Case Workers as having a negative attitude, which they interpret as not wanting to become re-employed. For example, Simon complaining about being *'skint'* and having no money is seen by Debbie as an excuse because she is *'working skint'*, and she thinks that is worse (FN 443). It is mentioned several times that the Case Workers believe the men don't find jobs because they don't, *'want it'* enough (FN 28, 75, 231, 266, 305, 312, 510). As such, the Case Workers try to instil these character traits through the imposition of positive affect, such as describing the process of finding and applying for a job as *'exciting'* (FN 401, 404, 444, 558), encouraging them to give jobs, *'a bit of love'* by clicking on the heart icon (FN 443) and suggesting that completing their job search records is something that will make them *'feel good'* (FN 631). The men's complaints

about how they are belittled by those providing unemployment services, such as Simon explaining that he doesn't like being *'dictated to'* (FN 461), are dismissed as *'fault finding'* which they are told will, *'have to stop'* (FN 460, 467). Therefore, despite undertaking self-monitoring through recording their job search activities, the men are not effectively demonstrating that they are undertaking this willingly and with a positive attitude, and have thus not become the, 'conformist, docile' (Heyes, 2013; 163) bodies that welfare reform discourse requires. The men's own assessment of their situation, however, relates to external factors, rather than their own behaviours, as outlined in the final vignette within this section:

> **V9: 'What chance have we got?' (Smithy)**
> Smithy says that it was on the news that eight million jobs have been lost to machines and computers and therefore, 'what chance have we got?'. Greg leans on his walking stick and explains that he's waiting for an operation on his spine and he still has to job search. Smithy jokes that it's more like Greg needs an operation on his wallet. He complains that he applies for loads and loads of jobs and he, 'never hears nothing back.' Bob chips in and agrees strongly that not hearing back is the 'worst part' of looking for jobs. Doug complains about the uselessness of them being continually sent on courses. 'People go to university and they get all that education and they still can't get jobs' Smithy argues, adding that, 'they have to take any job they can get', which he calls, 'madness'.
> Doug then suggests that they should open up a factory in the area. 'Making what?' asks Smithy in disbelief. Terry, who is mostly quiet, suggests, 'saveloy sandwiches with pease pudding'. There is then an argument amongst the men about whether the sandwiches should contain mustard, with Doug believing they should and Smithy disagreeing. Smithy adds that foreigners come to the country and they make a success of the small businesses like the corner shop – jobs that no one else really wants.
>
> (FN 117, 121)

Here Smithy directly links the loss of certain types of jobs *('lost to machines and computers'*) to the chance of the men of regaining employment *('what chance have we got?'*), thereby indicating more competition for those jobs remaining. Smithy's question forms a dialogue with the issues he raises from news stories regarding job losses and education (*'People go to university and they get all that education and they still can't get jobs'*), again implying that the men are at the bottom of the hierarchy regarding chances for employment. Drawing on the earlier point regarding needing qualifications to perform certain

roles, the men cannot complete with the more educated people they view as being forced to take lower-level jobs that might have otherwise been open to them (*'they have to take any job they can get'*). Smithy's point about education links to Doug's statement that the courses the Jobcentre sends them on are useless. Despite the Case Workers often encouraging the men to attend courses run for unemployed people, which are largely computer-based, as *'the experience would look good on your CV'* (FN 174), Steph advises them not to put all the courses on their CV as *'to an employer it looks like you've just been on a load of courses with the Jobcentre'*, adding that, *'they're not really for the job'* (FN 456). Smithy likewise suggests that the number of certificates he has earned are only good for papering his walls (FN 580). Thus, as courses are not useful for re-employment, they become merely a way to fill time while the men are 'parked' (Wiggan, 2015) within the jobseeking system. Therefore, it would appear that the answer to Smithy's rhetorical question is partially affirmed. In other words, it is recognised that they have little chance of re-employment. However, as Greg notes, despite their issues, including his health problems, they are still required to undertake job search and apply for jobs.

4.2.7. Summary: *How do long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?*

Although each of the vignettes presented in this section draw on different stories about the men's interactions with the workers, systems and practices that implement welfare state unemployment policy, one aspect of commonality is the effect this has in finalising their character as potentially deviant and non-compliant. In line with Foucault's theory of governmentality, they are subjected to both direct governance and attempts to impose self-governance. The former is reflected in the panoptical surveillance, both inside and outside institutional walls, attempts at bodily control through the information gathering in line with Foucault's (1998: 138) notion of biopower, and the regulation and supervision of space and time. The latter occurs through the disallowing of past and individual identity, in line with Goffman's (1957: 49-50) notion of mortification, and the requirement for positive affect, the absence of which becomes the reason for why the men do not obtain re-employment. However, while stigmatising unemployed people in this way aims to force re-entry into the labour market, it simultaneously lowers the chances of this occurring. There is

little opportunity for the men to challenge this negative characterisation because any attempt to do so risks reinforcing the monologic notion that they are the problem, thus supporting these practices as both acceptable and necessary. This means that their interaction with the welfare state discourse, particularly within the Jobcentre, is very one-sided.

Work Club is, in part, an exception to this. These vignettes emphasise the importance of dialogue as a means by which the men can make sense of their experiences. Whether the Case Workers agree with the men or not, they are enabled to express their emotions, such as anger, at Work Club in a way which is not generally permitted within the welfare system (Peterie et al., 2019). The stories the men tell about their treatment within in the Jobcentre, from a dialogical narrative perspective, are a form power relation that aims to affect others by invoking sympathy, agreement and support, such as in the first two vignettes. Although the men are pressed to take “any job”, as none are offered to them, they must instead accept “any response” as relief from the feeling of deadening invoked by the finalisation of character. How this treatment makes them feel is discussed in further detail in the following section, 4.3.

Many of the vignettes also hint at the carnivalesque reversibility which is expanded upon in section 4.4. This is a response to the hierarchical position the men are placed in, reflected in the rough hierarchy of jobs produced by the men. While panoptical surveillance means a dissociation of the ‘see/being seen dyad’ (Foucault, 1975/1991: 202), seeing is a form of knowing which is appropriated by the men to support hierarchical reversals. As such the men “see” themselves in other positions, a movement which allows them to imagine things differently, providing them with temporary relief from their position at the bottom and allowing them to refute the ability of this hierarchical ordering to affect them.

4.3. Research Question 2: *What is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?*

This section seeks to respond to the second research question by considering four key metaphors for unemployment used by the men themselves in relation to their experience. Approaching the experience of unemployment from this

metaphorical perspective is based on the notion that metaphors are the way in which the primal experience of the body begins to be brought to language. Kolter et al., (2012: 203) describe metaphors as developing over time as the creativity of speech transforms implicit bodily memory into explicit memory, in line with Merleau-Ponty's notion of how perception of the world is expressed through individual bodies. Thus, metaphors are a way to get closer to the original experience that phenomenology seeks to access. Metaphors are also viewed as a way to indirectly express how it feels to be long-term unemployed while avoiding the limits placed on individual expression by narrative expectations of demonstrating self-blame and progress that align with welfare state monoglossia.

4.3.1. Animal Metaphor

Bob complains twice, including as outlined in the first vignette (V1), that the staff at the Jobcentre, *'treat you like animals'* (FN 619, 716). This alludes to bodily experience in which he feels he is being treated as less than human; as a mere commodity, and ultimately disposable, which aligns with the following metaphors of meat and death. However, as with traditional hierarchies of human/animal relations, there are degrees of separation in which some animal behaviour is considered more human-like than others. Merleau-Ponty (2003: 214) viewed human and animal as intertwining in the flesh of the world, in which there are, 'strange anticipations or caricatures of the human in the animal'. This is reflected in the stories about animals outlined in the following vignettes. In particular, Smithy's pet parrot, is sometimes parodied by the informants as Smithy's *'wife'* (FN 664, 805) and sometimes is used to reflect Smithy's own behaviour or views. The capitalistic view of animals, and likewise of unemployed people, as commodities, such as with the concept of the reserve army of labour (see sections 2.3.1. and 2.3.5.) is reflected in the men's stories of "wild" animals, such as a spider and a snake (V11 and V12). However, the relation to the animals remains reciprocal, as the men enter into dialogue with them, offer them human food and infuse them with human-like behaviour. Finally, Smithy's description of pigeon keeping fully aligns with animals being a killable commodity (V13). The purpose of this animal life is merely to make profit for the owner, either through winning races or breeding. This animal story aligns most with the capitalistic view of animals in which

animal life is worthless if it is not contributing to profit, and thus it becomes killable. This progression from human-like animals to killable animals is outlined in the order of the vignettes, beginning with Smithy's parrot:

> **V10. 'It's worse than a wife!' (Smithy's parrot)**
> Smithy explains that he has a new neighbour who moved into the flat opposite him who is a Vicar for the Baptist Church. He says that he took a parcel in for the neighbour and at about 4.30pm, his doorbell rang. Smithy explains that when he opened the door, his parrot shouted, 'get away from the fucking door' at the Vicar, who was stood there with the parcel delivery card. Smirking, Smithy recounts that he had to apologise and explain that it was his parrot. Putting on a mock posh accent, Smithy says that the preacher had responded, 'I know, I can hear it swearing in the morning.' Smithy says the parrot, 'swears like a trooper' and that it will, 'have to stop'. Doug advises him that he, 'shouldn't tell it to effing shut up then.'
> Smithy says the parrot will sit on his shoulder and whisper in his ear but he warns that you have to be careful because if you're nasty to it, it doesn't forget. 'It's like a wife!' Debbie exclaims and everyone laughs. Smithy explains that the parrot spits peanut shells at his head and one time about forty hit him one by one. Debbie asks him what he did to deserve such treatment. 'Stop out' says Smithy. He says when he got back the parrot was chattering away like it was having a go at him. 'It's worse than a wife!' concludes Debbie.
>
> (FN 122, 376, 805-806)

Smithy's parrot is a parody of human behaviour, being that it speaks human language and is given a human role. However, its behaviour is somewhat exaggerated from a human perspective and as such is quite rebellious, for example, swearing. However, at times it also acts out behaviour that Smithy himself may wish to undertake. As such, there is an ambiguity in the dialogue, from which it cannot be certain who the Vicar overheard or how the parrot's behaviour was learned. The hierarchical moral judgement Smithy feels against the 'animal' behaviour of swearing is highlighted by the 'posh' sounding voice that he adopts when he speaks in the voice of the Vicar. Due to their confined living conditions, which Smithy describes as in his interview as, *'My hoose is that small y'put y'key in th'front door, y'put th' back window oot*[10]*…It's that bad.'* (Smithy's interview p7), the Vicar, a religious authority, can easily encounter Smithy's life and pass judgement on it. However, Smithy is able to momentarily flatten this hierarchy through the carnivalesque expression of, 'curses and

[10] 'My house is that small, [when] you put your key in the front door, you put the back window out'

oaths' (Bakhtin, 1984a, 109). Thus, through the carnivalesque, Smithy resists the finalisation of his character by the Vicar, a notion which is discussed in more detail in section 4.4. It is also interesting to note that Smithy's words that the parrot will, *'have to stop'* swearing, echo those of Debbie when she discusses the men's fault finding (see section 4.2.6.), thus reflecting the parrot as a caricature of Smithy, which human Smithy must keep in check.

However, the alternative role of the parrot is the reverse of this, as in other stories it is parodied as keeping Smithy's behaviour in check by acting in the human role of *'wife'*, and there is thus a reciprocal, reversible relation between Smithy and his parrot. A number of the men's stories and comments give women the responsibility of "nagging" men in order to shape their behaviour. For example, Smithy explains that *'If I got caned at school, I wouldn't dare tell me Mam or I'd get caned again!' because she'd say, 'you must have been doing something wrong to get caned!'* (FN 54). Additionally, they use the term, *'wife'* to refer to any woman in a position of authority, such as a worker at Citizens Advice (FN 143) or welfare course leaders (FN 56, 173, 694). Therefore, the parrot enacts the apparent right of the female wife to "nag" the male husband. Although this is a reversal of the typical relationship between human and animal, given that the human would normally control the animal, the behaviour is excusable due to the animal's wild nature, as indicated by other stories told by the informants in which animals understandably lash out when their territory is invaded (FN 394, 733). The stories allude to humans, as well as animals, at times being wild, and at others tame; both rebellious and conforming, and that if they are treated like animals then it is understandable that they may respond as such. However, conversely, this also aligns with a monologic perspective in that if unemployed people "lash out" and express resistance through anger (Peterie et al., 2019), they reinforce the apparent need for control. In the following two vignettes the behaviour of wild animals is related more closely by the men to the job search practices they are required to undertake:

V11. ‘Miss Muffet sacked it’ (Bob’s spider)
Bob says that he's got a giant spider living on the outside of his flat window. It's made a web about a foot wide and he demonstrates the size by holding his hands apart. He says a fly landed on the web and the spider came out. He demonstrates his shock at the size of it by quickly moving his head back and shoulders forward. Steph offers to get the Russell Grant Baby Name Book out again so that they can pick a name for the spider. Bob says that he's already named it Tommy and that he, 'made it a bacon sandwich this morning, but it wouldn't come out'. He says that he doesn’t like spiders much, but he wouldn’t harm them. Greg thinks that spiders won’t hurt you. Terry says he once went round his mate’s house and his mate’s pet tarantula had shed its skin. He could see the skin in the tank but not the tarantula, so he asked his mate where it was and his mate explained, ‘it’s out’, and pointed to where the spider was in the room, asking Terry if he wanted to hold it, which he says firmly he didn’t.
A few weeks later at Work Club there is a spider on Smithy that he keeps having to flick onto the floor. Bob says that it was on him and then it went onto Smithy. He says maybe it’s Tommy, in which case he better catch it and take it home. ‘Tommy!’ exclaims Steph, laughing that they have named the spider. A while later the spider appears to be back again. ‘It’s looking for a job’ jokes Smithy, ‘Miss Muffet sacked it’. They both laugh and Bob adds, ‘it’s got eight pens’, prompting Smithy to re-tell his pen story, in which he brings a tiny notebook and pen to record his job search, only for the Case Workers to accuse him of having the same pen the whole time he has attended and suspiciously it has never run out of ink.

(FN 650, 697)

This vignette outlines the progression from the spider undertaking its normal wild behaviour (building a web outside, catching a fly), to being named and then imagined as joining Work Club and undertaking behaviours like the men themselves in looking for a job. Wildness represents disorder (the spider makes it web where it likes and doesn’t come out when invited, the tarantula is ‘out’ in a location in the room unknown to Terry) and is thus scary (Tommy is a big spider, Bob doesn’t like spiders much, Terry doesn’t want to hold the Tarantula). Throughout the story this wildness is brought under control by transforming the spider into something docile and human-like, which is comical rather than scary.

Foucault (1975/1991; 137) noted that the first stage in obedience, and thus docility, is the control of the body. Thereby, the animal must learn to control what are seen as its wild and animal impulses in order to be part of the human world. For the spider, this achieved through the use of what could be called the

jobseeker's tool: the pen. At Work Club when the men bring their own pens, often along with a notebook as well, it is taken by the Case Workers as a sign that they are taking ownership of their job search, as it is used to record what roles they have applied for. For example, Simon exclaims, *'I astonished myself when I got a notebook!'* at which Steph and Smithy pretend to get emotional, mockingly wipe their eyes, and Smithy declares in a high-pitched voice, *'the bairn's flying the nest'* (FN 609). Smithy's comment is a link to an earlier conversation in which Steph told him that if they demonstrated the character trait of *'self-reliance'* they wouldn't need to come to Work Club as much (FN 584).

However, the pen is thereby also a potential measurement of compliance, with Smithy elsewhere suggesting that his own pen would be taken away and measured to see how much ink he has used, and thereby assess whether he has been undertaking enough job search (FN 328). This aligns with Foucault's (1975/1991; 137) suggestion that to ensure docility, as well as utility and bodily control, it is necessary to partition, 'as closely as possible time, space, movement'. The pen is not just used to record how time is spent, particularly in the space of Work Club, but its use requires a certain bodily position and movement. As such, the exaggerated parody of the spider with eight pens - one for each appendage - suggests its extreme docility and compliance. Smithy and Bob's creation of Tommy subjects the spider to the same kind of treatment they themselves have experienced: the repeated training of the body in order to form habits, which make it more useful as an economic subject. In other words, Tommy is 'made' as an individual with his own historiography (*ibid.*; 170, 191). That Tommy has been *'sacked'* by Miss Muffet defines his experience in economic terms that enables him to also become a 'case' (*ibid.*; 192) and thus brought under the control as a jobseeker.

In line with this, location seems to matter. Tommy is only imagined as a docile spider when he appears to enter Work Club; prior to that he is described as a normal spider. Likewise, Smithy's parrot is allowed to rebel is his home and is not imagined as a jobseeker. Bob's original notion of feeling like he is treated like an animal is also specific to a particular location: the Jobcentre. Bodily self-control is necessary in these locations to demonstrate docility and compliance,

otherwise measures are taken to enforce this control. Thus, to be treated like an animal is the aim to make docile through extreme control because the jobseeker is perceived to lack the necessary self-control. The notions of wildness, location and control are also reflected in the following vignette:

> **V12. 'You looking for work?' (Steph's wild snake)**
> Steph says that she went for a walk at the weekend on the hills and saw a snake. Steph re-enacts her encounter with the snake by waving her arms in the air, and then adopts the response of the snake itself by making an angry hissing sound. Smithy asks what kind of snake it was, and specifically whether it was a Grass Snake or an Adder. Steph says she thinks it was an Adder and that she has a photograph of it on her phone, which she then takes out to show Smithy. 'Did you ask it if it wanted a job?' asks Smithy. Steph takes on a wide pose and gestures towards the imaginary snake as she lowers her voice to ask it, 'you looking for work?' Then returning to her normal pose and voice she adds, rather dejected, 'I'm not good at getting people jobs Smithy'.
>
> (FN 385)

Smithy's question about whether Steph offered the snake a job suggests, somewhat mockingly, that it is a concern the Case Workers adopt at all times and towards all things. That a job might be offered to a wild snake emphasises the ridiculousness of this proposal. Steph, whose bodily movements suggest that she is enacting an embodied memory, takes up Smithy's suggestion by changing from a frightened posture (waving arms) to adopting a strong stance and an official voice. However, Steph does not extend the scenario any further, concluding with the statement that she is not very effective at getting anyone a job. This later leads into the dialogue outlined in vignette 21 in which the men blame the Case Workers for not facilitating their re-employment. However, in the snake story both Smithy and Steph use words that imply the snake also has a part to play. Smithy asks if the snake *wanted* a job, aligning with the Case Workers belief that the men don't gain re-employment because they don't 'want it' enough (V8), whereas Steph asks whether the snake is *looking* for work, which also fits with the condition that in accordance with the ILO definition, individuals must be 'seeking work' to be classed as unemployed and thereby eligible to claim welfare benefits. Thus, although Steph appears to take responsibility, given it is her job to support unemployed people into work, there is also an implication that the wild snake cannot be tamed unless it wants to be. Applying this metaphor to unemployment programmes emphasises the reliance

of governmentality on the internalisation of stigma and blame in order to prompt self-governance. As the men participate in a carnivalesque reversibility that shifts this blame onto the Case Workers (see V21), it implies a recognition of forces beyond their control impacting on their ability to gain employment. This is a narrative which does not align with welfare state monoglossia yet is expressed through the metaphor of a snake in Steph's path that she cannot tame.

The wild nature evident in the animal stories of the parrot, spider and snake contrast with the final story told by Smithy during his interview regarding breeding and racing pigeons. He told this story prompted by a photograph he had taken (figure 1) of some pigeon lofts. While, unlike the snake and spider stories, this is not directly related by Smithy to jobseeking practices, it provides an example of how animals treated as a mass have no individual identity and are thus, 'killable' (Buller, 2013; Colombino & Giaccaria, 2016):

V13. 'Any pigeon that doesn't do well…gans the distance' (Smithy's pigeons)

Smithy: Oh, the old pigeon lofts [figure 1]. I used to race pigeons there. I had 280 pigeons… [but] err it's just I thought, well, I've gotta get meself meat instead o'racing pigeons on a weekend…it was cheap when I first started, it was only like five pence a ring so you could breed a few young 'uns, and ten pund[11] a sack, an' by the time I finished it was twenty-five pund a sack an' like 35 pence a ring an' if you're, you're breeding sixty, seventy young 'uns it all totals up. [I used to] take them on a truck, used to hoy[12] them, get me pal in his van an' chuck them in the back an you'd take 'em to [the next County]…He'd phone us an' say, 'right I'm letting 'em oot now', so you'd time them back an you'd read, take the number of, the ring that was back first, second and third, an' well, they're nee good, they're about 20 minutes late. So, they've gotta gan.

Me: What? Do you release them, or…?

Smithy: It's not that, if you released them, they'd only come back anyway. Cos a racing pigeon, you can't retrain. So, what happens is, members of the public find 'em. The only place that you can report 'em to is Amtracs and have them sent back. Amtracs reports to Pigeon Club, 'we've found a pigeon, such-and-such code'…They send you a letter, hopefully you can get a transfer, when you can transfer the pigeon to whoever, a race pigeon keeper, but if he's not, you've gotta pay Amtracs to come to go get the bird and

[11] Pund is a colloquial term for monetary pounds.

[12] Hoy is a colloquial term for throw

> bring it back to you. Which was seventy-five quid. So, people just knacked them. That's why they call it knacking season. Any pigeon that doesn't do well flying in that season gans the distance.

(Smithy's interview; p8-9)

Figure 1. Smithy's photograph of the pigeon lofts

Unlike in the previous animal stories, the pigeons are not given any human-like or individualising characteristics. The pigeons are viewed only in economic terms: what it costs to keep them versus how much can be made by the winners. This can be profitable for the pigeon-racer, with Smithy saying it is, *'unbelievable how much you can make'* (Smithy's interview, p10). However, only the first three positions tend to win prizes, and therefore the only time individuals are separable from the mass is if they come first, second or third in a race. Thus, they are ranked hierarchically based on performance. There are only two purposes of the pigeon, both of which ultimately aim to make money for their owner. First, is to win races, and second to breed: they must perform in the first in order to be valuable in the second. If pigeons do not meet these requirements, they represent only an expense (*'seventy-five quid'*) and therefore the pigeon owner is justified in killing (*'knacking'*) them. It is so

acceptable to do this that it is even related to a particular time of year amongst the pigeon owners (*'knacking season'*). Thereby, the animals are a mere commodity for the purpose of profit-making, without which there is no justification for their life. In line with Foucault's (1975/1991: 109) notion of disciplinary power, the body becomes the property of society and biopower, represented through the statistical ranking, provides the socially acceptable evidence that particular lives should be, 'disallow[ed]…to the point of death' (Foucault, 1998: 138), although the actual killing of the pigeons is more representative of sovereign, rather than disciplinary, power (Foucault, 1975/1991: 63).

Therefore, when Bob mentions that the staff at the Jobcentre, '*treat you like animals*' (FN 619, 716), animal metaphors, developed from stories told by the men themselves, enable an understanding of what this might mean in terms of power relations. First, an animal is seen to occupy a lower hierarchical position than a human, and thereby considered to be a non-person, or less than human. Second, it is the disallowance of any non-conformance, deemed as wildness, which justifies an attempt to induce docility through bodily control in order to enable social re-integration. Finally, if animals are unable to conform with these requirements, they become killable meaning in which there is no longer any human or economic value in keeping the animal and it is thus socially acceptable to dispose of them. This latter notion is closely linked to the three remaining metaphorical experiences of meat, death and dirt.

4.3.2. Meat Metaphor: Being unemployed is to be treated like meat

One of the reasons why it is socially acceptable to kill certain animals is for the purpose of turning them into meat, because it is valued for consumption. Unlike an animal, meat no longer has the potential to be wild and it is thus much easier to control meat as a commodity. Meat thereby represents various notions of subordination, or simple hierarchical relations, such as the power a meat-eater has over meat, and the superiority of the rich who can afford meat over those living in poverty who may not be able to afford meat (see V13 in which Smithy gives up pigeon racing so he can afford '*meat*'). One of the most prominent metaphorical connections with meat is that of masculinity, with meat eating being considered a representation of masculine power (Adams, 2015:

xxxiv), and the ability of the male gaze to make women feel like meat (Glapka, 2018). Therefore, for a man to express this feeling of being treated like meat contradicts its traditional metaphorical representation of male dominance over female.

Unlike the other metaphors outlined, there is no particular story constructed by the men which can be associated with being viewed or treated like meat. During a dialogue when I ask the men to tell me what it's like to be unemployed, Simon explained that *'it's shite and the money is shite'*, adding, *'I'm unemployed, I'm not a piece of meat'* (FN 299). He then described how he has been unemployed since he was briefly in prison nearly thirty years ago. Later that day, when Simon was told off quite forcefully by Debbie for being late because he didn't want to walk to Work Club in the rain, he repeated, *'I'm not a piece of meat'* (FN 304). To a certain extent this expression is a reversal of traditional gender relations, given the female Case Workers have power over the male unemployed, such as the ability to report them for lateness and non-attendance and thereby for sanction. However, as noted previously, there is some expectation that a woman's role is to "nag" a man. It thereby appears to be the men's subordination in general, rather than being based on gender dualism. There are a number of discussions where the men explain how they have got into trouble, such as being kicked off unemployment courses, for expressing their anger towards younger men who talked down to them or told them what to do (FN 158, 789, 801). When Simon discusses losing a job interview when he refused to take off his hat he explains, *'I don't like getting dictated to, they're little dictators'* (FN 461). To dissent in this way does not align with the required docility and Simon's assertion that he is *not* meat is a denial of the power and control that is attempted to be asserted over him. While it can be argued that the men do not meet the ideals of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), particularly as they are older and unemployed, they find other ways to assert power which cannot be interpreted according to gender alone. These forms of resistance are discussed in section 4.4. in relation to the third research question.

The progression from the previous animal metaphor to the metaphor of meat discussed in this section is mediated by death. Death metaphors have been

linked to the experience of unemployment by Ainsworth and Hardy (2009) and Boland and Griffin (2018) (see also, Griffin et al., 2020). The use of the death metaphor in these instances allows the significant impact of job loss and welfare reform policy respectively on individual bodies to be expressed. Normally these experiences are covered over with the use of terms which present them as acceptable, such as “activation”. That the men used a death metaphor enabled them to describe how it feels to be unemployed without expressing disallowed emotions which are covered over through the imposition of positive affect.

4.3.3. Death Metaphor: Being unemployed is to be treated like a corpse

Ainsworth & Hardy (2009) identified how the older long-term unemployed described job loss as feeling like death, particularly in cases of older workers who viewed their unemployed status as permanent. In the Literature Review it was argued that death is an appropriate metaphor some unemployed people, particularly those living in poverty and thus are reliant upon claiming welfare benefits, are seen to suffer social death upon their unemployment because social value is based upon economic contribution through paid employment. However, those unemployed considered to be socially dead cannot be “at peace” in the “afterlife”, as jobseeking is a form of purgatory (Griffin et al., 2020: 183) which can only be escaped by becoming re-employed. In this study, Bob likens this requirement for the “dead” to recommodify themselves as being dug up as a corpse to be sold for profit, with the Case Workers parodically playing the role of the body snatchers who carry out this act. This is outlined in the following vignette:

> **V14. ‘I don’t know which one’s Burke and which one’s Hare’ (Bob)**
> Bob is talking himself through logging into Find a Job. He spots Debbie and Steph arriving at the Community Centre door and says, ‘it’s Burke and Hare’, adding, ‘I don’t know which one’s Burke and which one’s Hare’. He describes the story, saying Burke and Hare were famous criminals who dug up bodies and sold them to doctors. Bob explains that his son is, ‘going off it’ because he wants to donate his body to science after his own death. Over-hearing the conversation, Smithy comments he heard about a museum exhibition where they sliced cadavers in half from top to bottom and then displayed them on plates. He thinks it was wrong to do so. When Debbie and Steph come over they say that, ‘maybe we should do some introductions’ for logging in. Smithy says that his name is, ‘sex on legs Smith’. ‘Was that your little bit about

> yourself?' asks Steph, unamused. She then asks him, 'do you know our names?' 'Burke and Hare' whispers Bob.
>
> (FN 293, 437, 536)

Bob's parody of the Case Workers suggests that his bodily experience of long-term unemployment is that it feels like death, and that his interaction with the welfare state unemployment policy, as represented and implemented by the Case Workers, is like being dug up, as a corpse, to be sold for profit. The historical case of Burke and Hare is adapted by Bob (*'dug up bodies and sold them to doctors'*) to align with his circumstances. Although the bodysnatching industry Bob refers to did involve digging up corpses, Burke and Hare were motivated by profit to murder their victims before they sold the bodies (McCracken-Flesher, 2012: 7, 10). Murder has been utilised as a term which more accurately describes how capitalism pushes unemployed people into poverty (Grover, 2019). Bob's inference that he is himself a metaphorical corpse indicates that he recognises his own work-related self as long dead, buried and undisturbed, aside from the intervention of welfare state policy. If the event of Bob's job loss due to redundancy is considered the event of his "murder", then this occurred two decades ago. Instead, there is some indication that it is the implementation of punitive welfare policy that "murders" or "kills" the men, such as when Smithy indicates in the following vignette (V15) that Steph would *'kill'* him if he had to miss Work Club due to a hospital appointment. Elsewhere Debbie says she is, *'gonna kill'* Simon for not turning up to Work Club (FN 69, 126) and Greg describes having his name put forward for an administration course as being on the, *'hit list'* (FN 487). In former two cases the word 'kill' refers to 'sanction', whereas Greg's allusion to the potential of being murdered is reference to how courses are often used to punish non-compliant unemployed as they require a greater time commitment, which aligns with the metaphor of purgatory. Thus, welfare state ideology both "murders" the men and attempts to bring them back to life by digging up their "corpse". This may also reflect attempts to "kill" an old identity, reflected in Goffman's (1957: 49-50) concept of mortification.

However, despite Bob's nostalgia for the past, including having a, *'good laugh'* with the lads when he was employed (FN 154), he does not appear to be clinging to an old work-related identity that he needs to let go of in order to

move on into re-employment as, particularly older, unemployed people have been accused of (Newman, 1988: 10; Ainsworth & Hardy, 2009; Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014). This psychological explanation that the long-term unemployed are excluded from the current economy because they are too attached to an "old" economic identity them to be blamed for their unemployment. The notion that physical death is potentially a more realistic prospect than gaining re-employment means that perceived impending physical death is not only a realistic prospect, but that it is potentially a release and an opportunity to be in control. This is reflected in Bob's desire to donate his body to science (V14), as well as in the following vignette:

> **V15. 'Go sign on at the pearly gates' (Bob)**
> Smithy has not been attending Work Club for a few weeks and Debbie and Steph are evasive about why. However, when he returns he is eager to recount a recent brush with death. Some paramedics had banged on Smithy's door in the middle of the night with the news that his blood test results from earlier that day might mean he would be, 'in a coma or dead'. Smithy spent two days in hospital and was supposed to return for an appointment at the hospital today but had told them he couldn't because he has to job search and Steph would kill him if he didn't attend. 'We're not that bad!' Debbie exclaims.
> Smithy later complains that he has pins and needles and can't get rid of them. 'I think I'm not long for this world' he says wistfully, then adds that he wishes death would hurry up. 'Go sign on at the pearly gates' Bob suggests. Smithy responds that he would, 'probably need a passport' for that. 'I'm going down there' explains Bob, adding, 'it's warmer'. Smithy agrees that would be a better prospect because there will be a, 'Bar-b-que every day'. 'And women in red skirts' Bob adds temptingly.
>
> (FN 469, 486-487)

In Boland and Griffin's (2018) notion of jobseeking as a process of metaphorical purgatory, jobseekers must go a series of trials in order to enter the heaven of work. Here Bob's reference to the pearly gates of heaven is linked to signing on, which is the regular process that unemployed welfare benefit claimants need to undertake to prove they are eligible for welfare support. After Smithy implies that he would not have the correct documentation (a passport) to enter heaven, Bob makes a Bakhtinian downward movement indicating that *'down there'*, or hell, is both more suitable and superior to heaven. This can be seen as a metaphorical representation of the carnivalesque atmosphere at Work Club: it involves suffering, as in hell, but they are determined to have fun. While the former notion aligns closely with

that of purgatory, purgatory is temporary with a chance of entering heaven, whereas hell is a permanent residence with no chance of heaven. Their welcome acceptance of an inferior position in hell, as compared to heaven (*'I'm going down there'*, Smithy agrees this will be a better prospect) denies its ability to affect them, as they transform that which is considered subordinate into the better option. Thus, the men indicate that they accept this inferior position by framing it as a choice.

While physical death normally implies a loss of control, being that there is no choice over the time at which it occurs, Smithy welcomes it (he wishes death would hurry up) and Bob sees it as an opportunity for control given that he is seeking to donate his body to science, despite his son and Smithy disagreeing. Death as a choice has previously been linked to claiming welfare benefits, whereby unemployed people have committed suicide rather than be subject to poverty and stigma (Mills, 2018). In this case stigma as a finalisation of character, and thus a form of social death, leads to physical death due to its internalisation. However, the men, in Bakhtin's (1984b: 58) terms, recognise, 'the falseness of such an approach' and use the carnivalesque downwards movement to dispel any fear or threat. They recognise that they always are able to have the last word about themselves. While this is no longer possible after physical death, funerals are an opportunity to create lasting positive memories of the deceased through celebration. This is echoed in the following vignette:

> **V16. 'You've got to die first!' (Terry)**
> Bob says that he's donating his body to science. 'Do you get paid?' Smithy asks. Doug laughs and exclaims that the money would be, 'no good after!'. Smithy adds that he told his mate that you get £200 when you donate your body and he hasn't seen him since. 'He'll have topped himself[13] for the money!' laughs Smithy. Terry then tells them that there is someone, who has been on the Committee of the Working Men's Club for years, complained that he doesn't have his photograph on the Club wall despite everything he has done for them. Terry said that the man asked what he had to do to get his photo up there. 'You've got to die first!' laughs Terry, adding, 'you'll never see your own picture up there.' Talking about the Club, Bob says that he's, 'seen some funerals in that place.' Terry has been to three funerals so far this year. 'You know you're getting old when you go to more funerals than weddings', says Smithy, adding with a chuckle, 'people are dying to get into that

[13] 'topped himself', meaning killed himself, or committed suicide

> cemetery'. Bob explains that he was at a funeral yesterday for a Mariner, which he seems quite in awe of as they had flags out for him and everything. He said he had a glass of sherry and woke up with a paper plate stuck to his head, which he must have used to bring back food from the funeral buffet. Debbie says that she once went to the funeral of a mud wrestler's daughter and it was crazy. Bob gives Debbie a sideways look and mumbles, 'aye'. Steph wonders whether the dead can see their own funeral. 'I like to think that they can' Debbie responds thoughtfully. Bob describes another funeral at which they played Bingo on the instructions of the dead man. Terry, who was also there, adds that the man had left £100 as a prize, and the lad who won didn't like bingo and had never played before that day. He says it was meant to be. The funeral song had been the Laughing Policeman, which they found really funny. 'I'm not being awful' Terrys says, 'but that's the best funeral I've been to'.
>
> (FN 218, 221,226, 281, 457, 590)

The vignette begins by referring to the economic worth of the body, although this is a value which can only be realised after physical death and is therefore of no use to the individual when alive (*'Do you get paid?'*, the money is *'no good after!'*, *'He'll have topped himself for the money!'*). The carnivalesque laughter at the prospect of killing yourself for money alludes to the nature of death as pregnant and giving birth (Bakhtin 1984a; 21, 48, 50, 53) to, 'something new and better' (Bakhtin, 1984a; 62). Thus, the old life, representing, 'the old authority and truth' (*ibid*.; 207) in which the men have no economic value is killed, and a new notion, in which the physically dead are remembered in the manner they would wish to be, is born. The identity of the deceased is represented through pictures, decorations, games and songs (photos on the wall, flags, Bingo, the Laughing Policeman) that leave memories long after physical death (*'the best funeral I've been to'*). Thus, laughter, food, and drink not only commemorate the deceased, but defeat death (*ibid*.: 79-80, 299). The dead thereby receive a form of recognition and affirmation of an identity which they cannot in life, as Terry laughs that, *'you'll never see your own picture up there'*. However, there is a suggestion of reciprocity when Debbie and Steph discuss whether the deceased can see their own funeral. Thereby, while imposed metaphorical death is a form of discipline enacted via power relations, the men are able to use the carnivalesque to deny it has affected them and appropriate it for their own purposes. However, that the men are able to dispel death, whether metaphorical or physical, through laughter should not imply its nature is trivial. It is a means by which they can develop a

reciprocal relation by confirming their ability to affect others. In other words, a way to confirm they are alive when they are treated as if they are dead.

The parody of Burke and Hare indicates the attempt that is still being made to return the men to the labour market, however fruitless Bob's parody implies that effort is. The final metaphor of dirt goes beyond this to suggest that the men are intrinsically worthless and therefore need to treated as befitting dirt, which is to be pulverised, dissolved and rotted away (Douglas, 1984: 160).

4.3.4. Dirt Metaphor: Being unemployed is to be viewed as scum

Scum, a form of dirt, is a metaphor which implies the unemployed "underclass" are irredeemable. Unlike the previous metaphors of animals, meat and death, which had some potential value as a commodity, dirt is intrinsically valueless as it is unproductive and thus forbidden by power (Foucault, 1991: 154, 201). Essentially, dirt represents social disorder (Douglas, 1984; 2) and for it to become orderly, dirt must be cleaned away. As with the animal metaphor applied to marginalised populations, dirt arouses disgust, with there being a close connection between physical dirt and moral taint. This is reflected in the questionnaire (V4) which implied unemployed people are physically dirty (questions about bathing, oral hygiene) and potentially immoral (questions about sexual health, child abuse). Thus 'dirt' poses a threat of contamination, or pollution, of the rest of the social order because it defies classification within existing social categories (Douglas, 1984: 36). To be seen as dirt is therefore to be objectified, as well as being morally judged and thus, finalised. These notions echo in Bob's belief that people see him as, 'scum', as follows:

> **V17. 'people think you're scum' (Bob)**
> Smithy asks Terry if he's going home. Terry replies that he's 'had enough'. Bob says that, 'being unemployed is sometimes fun' because you meet some, 'strange people', but that it's, 'sometimes depressing cos people think you're scum'.
>
> (FN 356)

Bob alludes to the dual nature of the carnivalesque experience of unemployment which has been outlined so far: people have a negative opinion of unemployed people, which can sometimes be counteracted by 'fun'. This notion of 'fun' is not the same as how those with resources can experience

unemployment as, ‘funemployment’ (Pignault & Houssemand, 2018: 361). It is fun as a survival mechanism; as something that enables them to laugh at social death, and thus to live through it. Bob here alludes to a psychological impact of these perceptions in that it is *‘depressing’*. However, the embodied perspective does not mean that considerations of the mind have no place in experience, but that the mind should be seen as being part of the body. While scum is used to refer to a mass of people at the bottom of the social order, such as by the comedian quoted in Dorling (2014), Bob’s comment emphasises that this mass is made up of real people who see themselves being subjected to such classifications.

Research has demonstrated that perceptions of dirtiness can arise because people are tainted by the physically dirty work they perform (Ackroyd & Crowdy, 1990). However, the men challenged the perception that being viewed as metaphorical dirt means they are also physically dirty or lacking proper hygiene. For example, Bob tells a story about working at the sausage casing factory in which a lad had cut his finger off when using a machine without a guard and Bob had to fish around in a bucket of *‘slime’* to find the severed finger (FN 152). As Bob tells this story he turns his left hand over to demonstrate the finger and finds a piece of fluff there saying, *‘ugh what’s that’* as he throws it on the floor in disgust. Thus, in Bob’s enacting of the embodied memory he emphasises that, while he performed dirty work, he is a clean person. However, broader social stigma frames the men as both physically and morally tainted because they are unemployed. Douglas (1984: 160) defined the proper place of dirt to be a rubbish heap, which could be equated with being parked within the welfare system. The reflection of social stigma within institutional practice and vice versa reinforces the perspective that unemployed welfare benefit claimants deserve such treatment. In other words, if they are dirt, then they need to be dealt with as such.

4.3.5. Summary: *What is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?*

Each of the metaphors discussed in section 4.3. involve social structuring mechanisms, with animals and meat indicating those considered to be at the bottom of society, and death and dirt designating those who have no place in, and are thus outside, society. All of the metaphors also allude to the deadening experience of character finalisation that is inherent in these processes, as well as links to the concept of social death. In conjunction with the previous section, it is demonstrated that the men experience loss of identity, social connection and losses associated with the body. It could thereby be argued that Kralova's (2018) criteria for social death are met, at least within capitalist social relations which rely on employment status. The further aspect of loss of personhood is reflected in the metaphors which define them as a non-person, or even non-human. That the men themselves use these metaphors, interpreted as an expression of their bodily experience of "deadening" practices, strengthens the notion that they have experienced a form of social death.

However, their stories also reveal that there are nuances to this experience. In particular, the notion of bodily wildness and the need for it to be made docile through the control of the mind. The various animal stories alluding to different spaces in which control needs to be demonstrated, and others which allow wild expression. This suggests the presence of the "other side", which Bakhtin (1984b: 272-273) noted was normally hidden. While the men's metaphorical expressions emphasise the negative affect that welfare discourse and social practices have upon them, there is also refusal to accept this, such as Simon insisting he is not a piece of meat. The carnivalesque is indicated throughout and, in the previous vignette, Bob suggested the tension between deadening and the carnivalesque through the differing experiences of being seen as 'scum' and 'fun'. 'Fun' as a strategy for surviving social death is considered in the following section.

4.4. Research Question 3: *How do older long-term unemployed men live through this experience?*

The response to the previous question, *what is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?* noted that, despite the men being aware of others' opinions of them, and it sometimes affecting them (Bob's comment that what people think is *'sometimes depressing'* FN 356), they largely remain aware of their own subjectivity and value. This is achieved by 'fun', or otherwise referred to by the men as *'having a laugh'*, a *'blowout'* or a *'frisk'* (FN 381, 611, 668, 721). This is seen as not only being the antidote to boredom, such as when Smithy states, *'Gotta have a laugh, I hate boring people'* (FN 115) and *'Gotta have a blowout, otherwise it gets boring'* (FN 721), but opposes the notion of death, or social death, evident when Smithy declares*, 'you'd die if you didn't have fun'* (FN 668). For the men, 'fun' involves anything that induces laughter, such as parody, practical jokes, sexual references and playful violence. 'Fun' is always inherently social; it is the ability to affect somebody else by making them laugh and is therefore reciprocal. Thus, 'fun' is in essence the men's term for the carnivalesque which has been mentioned throughout this chapter. This section outlines first how carnivalesque fun is an embodied survival strategy that dispels many types of threat and fear and argues that the men are aware of this strategy working because they have used it before, particularly in relation to prior experiences of work and industry. Specific examples of parody and practical jokes at Work Club are provided to illustrate this.

4.4.1. Carnivalesque and Survival

The backdrop of the men's everyday lives consists of past ruptures that have altered the community in the name of progress and profit. Local industry has moved out of the area in search of higher profit (Smith, 2010; 6). Some of the industries discussed by the men as being taken away from the area include a Tank Factory (Bob's interview, p3) Ship Building yards (FN 46), Lead Works (FN 223), Steel Works (Smithy's interview p1) and an Oil Refinery (FN 361). The movement of these industries reflects the loss of local job opportunities which the men were effectively socialised in (Willis, 1983; Fletcher, 2010; Bright, 2011). They were taught from an early age to value and embody these locally available jobs and the sorts of skills necessary to perform them. For

example, in a conversation amongst the men, Smithy describes learning how to ride a motorbike and drive a car at school as learning *'real things'* (FN 667), again linking to their inability to be able to rely on formal qualifications. Their schooling itself was intertwined with local industry as Smithy describes in the following extract from his interview when he refers to the operation of the Tank Factory:

V18. 'see them laughing their heeds off' (Smithy):

Smithy: 'Aye…tanks used to come in, used to park up and what they would dee[14] is, they'd get their base coat spray, then the tanks would come out, come along [the] road where we'd be waiting with 'em – for 'em, with car tyres. Cos the blokes used to kna[15] what we're doing, come from the…the bar, roll the tyres doon[16], the tank drivers would see them coming doon so they would slow doon. An' then what they'd dee is, as soon as they hit the [factory] wall an' it settled on the road they'd drive ower it an' cause a big bang…An' ye used t'dee it an' see them laughing their heeds[17] off an they'd just drive away. But the tanks would come back along [the] Road an' they had their battle colours on. Used to be in the middle of school trying to do your work and with the tanks ganning[18] past you'd be shaking along the desk.'

(Smithy's interview, p1-2)

Here, Smithy outlines the bodily impact of the workings of the local industry, which invaded and interrupted his schoolwork (*'in the middle of school trying to your work'*). The embodied nature of this experience is made present by Smithy as, in recounting the last part of this story, he shakes his arms across the top of the desk in front of him (Smithy's interview p2). Smithy not only describes how the production of tanks locally affects him, but how he and his friends (*'we'*) are able to affect it in turn. This involves them affecting not only objects (*'the tanks'*, *'car tyres'*) in a particular way (*'roll the tyres doon'*, *'slow doon'*, *'big bang'*), but others as subjects ('*the blokes used to kna* [know]', '*the tank drivers would see them coming'*, *'see them laughing their heeds off'*). It is the shared construction of the amusement of loudly bursting tyres that introduces the subjectivity into Smithy's story. Without this the tanks would be fully objectified, as the

[14] 'dee' means 'do', hence, 'what they would do'
[15] 'kna' means 'know', pronounced like 'nah', hence, 'the blokes used to know'
[16] 'doon' means 'down', hence, 'roll the tyres down'
[17] 'heeds' means 'heads', hence, 'laughing their heads off'
[18] 'ganning' means 'going', hence, 'the tanks going past'

subjective element of the drivers would be unacknowledged (*'tanks used to come in, used to park up…the tanks would come out, come along [the] road'*). Thereby, this is not only an ontological relation between human and world, but a world which is made, in a Bakhtinian sense, in terms of others, emphasising the importance of the affective relation between self and others. The carnivalesque laughter and fun is contrasted with Smithy's view of the local area now:

V19. 'it was good fun in them days, but now, it's all gone.' (Smithy)

Smithy: Ah it was good fun in them days, but now, it's all gone. They've knocked everything doon. It's just a shame. Everything that y'see round here now is all photographs. Just lucky we had people that were, had the brains to say 'right, we'll take a few photographs' and let people remember the area as it was, not as it is now because all the heritage is just ganning. Everything's all gone, it's all brand-new buildings, all fancy shapes, glass screens and everything. It's all gone. There's nowt left. So, it's nice to look through and see them again. Or hunt them doon, like you've gotta gan doon an' hunt these things…It's all history an' they just, they just tek[19] it away.

(Smithy's interview, p12)

As largely masculine, "working-class" employment has moved out of the area, it has been replaced with new types of local employer which Smithy alludes to as being clean (*'brand-new'*, *'glass'*) and higher class (*'fancy'*). That which Smithy explained in the previous vignette (V18) is not only gone but has been removed by unnamed others (*'they just tek* [take] *it away'*). However, this industrial past can still be brought to life by the men through stories and photographs (*'Everything that y'see round here now is all photographs'*), including those that Smithy and Bob took for the participatory visual research as well as other images displayed around the field. This aligns with Merleau-Ponty's (1973: 14) notion of the 'lived perspective', that the photograph cannot capture the full experience of what the men 'see' in their environment. Their long-term attachment to their world has given them a depth of knowledge which goes beyond the surface. Therefore, although the *'history'* and *'heritage'* of industry may be considered, *'all gone'*, which Smithy states three times in this vignette, traces can still be found if you, *'hunt these things'*. Both Bob and Smithy, in

[19] 'tek' means 'take, hence, 'they just take it away'

taking their photographs for the visual research, hunted down objects which had once been inextricably linked to industries within the community, yet had been moved outside the area. Bob took a photograph of the Tank that used be outside the local Tank Factory (Figure 2), now at a central museum because, *'some o' the lads says they couldn't realise where the tank went tee'* (Bob's interview p3). Smithy likewise takes a photograph of an old lintel from a local Shipyard (Figure 3, see following page). To Bob, Smithy, and others in their community such as Bob's mates, the objects are not museum pieces, but active parts of a past they lived through.

Figure 2. Bob's photograph of the tank

Figure 3. Smithy's photograph of the shipyard lintel

However, the men do not idealise this past. Many of their stories relate to having nothing (FN 316), having to steal food and clothes (Bob's interview p14, FN 296), and undertaking work which is physically dangerous, dirty and smelly (FN 150-153, FN 361). It is their relations with others that helped them get through these difficult times, such that, *'in those days people used to stick together because they all had the same, which was nowt'* (Bob- FN 296). Bob even describes moving from a "clean" job making toilets to a "dirty" job processing intestines because he had, *'more fun, with the lads an' that'* compared to being alone (Bob's interview p10). For the men, as Merleau-Ponty noted, surviving these traumatic experience are more than memories, they are, 'a manner of being' (Merleau-Ponty, 2009; 96) and thereby, as discussed in the Literature Review, their bodily memory of how they survived previous trauma enables them to tackle more recent trauma (Behnke, 2012: 90-92), such as being skint (FN 443), having holes in their clothes (FN 538) and surviving on a weekly food budget of £7 (FN 577). While the men do not agree that *'working skint'* is as bad as their situation (FN 443), Debbie shares many of their hardships, including similar childhood memories (FN 48), currently having holes in her shoes, unable to afford a new pair (FN 366) and scraping mould of her bread in order to make sandwiches, such that, in a form of reversibility,

Smithy calls her an, *'animal'* (FN 803). This potential for reversibility and reciprocity, which is not present in many of the other aspects of welfare state discourse and ideology, as discussed in section 4.2., is the reason why the carnivalesque is able to emerge by enabling a 'universal spirit' which is, 'the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants.' (Bakhtin 1984b: 8). As such, it represents an opposing force (Bakhtin, 1981; 272) to welfare state monoglossia, by enabling ambivalence and transgression. This centrifugal movement allows the creativity and spontaneity to enable them to recapture their grasp on the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1973; 125) as they are able to explore things in their world, 'fearlessly and freely' (Bakhtin, 1981; 26). This is outlined in the following section through stories about the men's used of parody to reverse perspectives, test the boundaries of self and other, and mock the seriousness of the 'official "truth"' (Bakhtin, 1984a; 39) of unemployment, specifically the pulling down of the official hierarchy.

4.4.2. Reversibility and Parody

Parody was a common occurrence at Work Club and emerged in several different forms. Work Club itself was often mocked as a parody of work, with Simon calling Debbie *'boss'* (FN 97), and negotiations regarding who can leave early and when occurring on a regular basis (e.g. FN 261, 349, 390). This also links to Work Club as a parody of school, with Bob asking, *'can we go Miss?'* (FN 362), Simon saying, *'Yes Miss'* (FN 216) and Steph telling Greg at another time, *'you're excused'* (FN 756). Likewise, when Steph mentions having taught the men self-reliance, Smithy adopts a mock posh accent and retorts, *'you listened to your teachers!'* (FN 584). Work Club is described by Steph as a place where, *'nobody gets told off'* (FN 100), and although they get *'homework'* (FN 174) they might receive praise for being a *'good boy'* (FN 409) or receive a *'gold star'* (FN 621). This does not necessarily contradict Debbie's assurance that they don't *'look down'* on the men (FN 30), as although it apparently reinforces the hierarchical relation, it also degrades it through humour. The parody mocks the extreme control over time, discipline and sanctions that characterise jobseeking, as outlined in section 4.2. As such, carnival is lived by 'all the people' (Bakhtin, 1984; 8), including the Case Workers. As it is Debbie's assertion that she disallows the hierarchy, it could be considered that the carnivalesque is being controlled as a, 'safety valve' (Grindon, 2004: 151) to

ensure that the men remain largely compliant. However, it should be noted that although the Case Workers often participate in the carnival atmosphere, it never occurs at a time of their choosing. Thus, the emergence of carnival is more like a surge or a bursting open, rather than something which is allowed to alleviate the potential for wider resistance. Nevertheless, it is likely that the closeness between the Case Workers and the men provides an atmosphere in which carnival can emerge, meaning that there are carnivalesque surges *because of* this relationship, not *in spite of* it. This is revealed in the following vignette:

> **V20. Bad Bridesmaids**
> Doug asks Debbie when she is going to get married. Debbie laughs and says, 'I'm never going to get married.' Doug continues, saying that him and Smithy will be bridesmaids, then correcting himself, saying that they will be page boys. Smithy strikes a model pose, one hand behind his head and the other at his waist and says in a high-pitched voice, 'This week; Hitchcock Estate, next week; Vogue!'. Doug wasn't at Work Club last week when Smithy made the same joke and he thinks it's hilarious. He laughs loudly for at least a couple of minutes and repeats the joke to himself. Debbie and Smithy then use his computer to look up "bad bridesmaid dresses" and pick out the worst ones for Doug and Smithy to wear at her non-existent wedding.
> Later, Smithy returns to the wedding theme when a woman asks him what time he's signing on tomorrow. 'I would tell you' Smithy responds, 'but I'm sick of you turning up in your wedding dress.' He says he knows what she is after, which is his dole money. With a completely straight face Steph interjects with the advice that if they get married they will, 'have to go on Universal Credit then because it's a change of circumstances.'
>
> (FN 322, 325)

The parody begins with Doug reinforcing traditional expectations and the gendered role of the 'wife' by asking Debbie when she will marry her new boyfriend; a relationship that Steph is shocked that Doug knows about before her. However, when Debbie rejects this (*'I'm never going to get married'*), Doug suggests that him and Smithy also refute traditional roles by being her bridesmaids. Bakhtin (1981: 170) identified clothing as one element, or series, of the carnivalesque. Although this focuses on clothing worn upside down or inside out, it is also about the, 'utilization [sic] of things in reverse' involving, 'paired images, chosen for their contrast' (Bakhtin 1984a; 126). In the above vignette the pairing is male/female in relation to the clothing series: men will

wear women's clothes, bringing themselves to the perceived level of the women in the hierarchy (see 4.3.2.), which is also reflected in Smithy's appropriation of a feminine voice and modelling pose (*'This week; Hitchcock Estate, next week; Vogue!'*). The hierarchy represented by Debbie as Case Worker is erased in the parody, as Smithy and Doug provide themselves with a role in Debbie's life that is far beyond their official and formal relationship. They use parody to invade Debbie's personal life, and are imagined as Debbie's closest friends, albeit "bad" bridesmaids. This may even be a reversal of the way that they feel governmentality extends into their personal lives and, thus, the formal world is destroyed. This aligns with Bakhtin's (1984: 20) notion of the function of parody to be to, 'bring down to earth, turn their subject into flesh.' The wedding theme is returned to later on the same day by Smithy, in which he imagines a woman trying to force him into a traditional marriage arrangement because she wants his *'dole money'*. This weakened form of the earlier parody is finally brought down to earth by Steph who brings back in the official voice of the Welfare State, within which marriage is simply viewed as, *'a change of circumstances'* which would force the couple to move to the Universal Credit benefit system, something which the men resist (FN 312, 718). Thus, the carnivalesque moment is ended, and the hierarchy and the world is returned to normal.

The above vignette was a parody of marriage which thus mocked and debased it as an institution. Many of the parodies at Work Club were parodies of Work Club itself in which the men acted as Case Workers and Debbie and Steph are framed as being unemployed. Thus, this reflects carnivalesque life as, 'the reverse side of the world' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 122) in which hierarchical reversals are typical as top is transferred to bottom and bottom is transferred to top. Such a parodic, hierarchical reversal is represented in following:

> **V21. 'I like to put a smile on people's faces' (Smithy)**
> Smithy comes back from a cigarette break and sees that Steph is sat in his seat using his computer. Adopting a professional sounding, slightly high-pitched voice he leans over Steph's shoulder and says, 'if you want any help to drag your CV over, I'll just be over here chatting.' Steph gets up and lets Smithy have his seat back. 'I like to put a smile on people's faces' says Smithy smugly. He smirks with his glasses in his hand, about to put them on. Steph, who is now sat behind him, reaches over with her foot and presses the lever underneath Smithy's chair, causing

> the seat to suddenly drop down. ‘Aya!’ he cries out, ‘me leg’s underneath.’ Now it’s Steph’s turn to smirk. Smithy gives her a sideways glance and says, ‘she’s not sorry y’know.’ Steph merely carries on talking to Doug. Smithy says that his only reason for coming to Work Club is to get picked on by Steph. ‘I think it’s funny me when I get hit’ he explains, ‘you gotta have a frisk, a laugh, you'd die if you didn't have fun'.
>
> (FN 425, 651, 668, 706)

The first reversal is of the hierarchical power relation between Steph as Case Worker and Smithy as unemployed. Their physical bodily positions are reversed; the men normally sit down at the computers and, in this case, it is Steph who is sat down and Smithy who is stood behind Steph, taking the normal position of a Case Worker. As such, the higher position is brought down to being lower, and vice versa, in a typical carnivalesque reversal of high to low in which, ‘[a]ll who are highest are debased, all who are lowest are crowned’ (Bakhtin, 1984b: 384). Smithy also appropriates the voice of the Case Worker (a professional sounding, slightly high-pitched voice) and while he offers help, as a Case Worker does, there is also a joking criticism in his words *(‘I’ll just be over here chatting.’*) This is a reversal of the monologic perspective upon unemployed people as lazy and as such are to blame for their own unemployment. For example, Smithy is accused by the Case Workers as having the same notebook for years as he hasn’t applied for enough jobs to be able to fill it (FN 683). However, the men reverse this accusation onto the Case Workers, suggesting that they are not effective in their jobs, such as chatting too much and not being professional (see following two vignettes). That there is positive (*‘if you want any help’*) with negative (*‘I’ll just be over here chatting’*) aligns with Bakhtin’s notion of praise-abuse which is representative of the dual, but mingled, nature typical of carnivalesque, which is delivered in an ironic and exaggerated style (Bakhtin, 1984b; 161). The carnivalesque element of ‘fun’ is clearly present as both Smithy and Steph ‘smirk’, as well as Smithy’s comments (*‘it’s funny’*, *‘you’d die if you didn’t have fun’*). When they return to their normal positions (Smithy sat in his chair, Steph behind) she brings him down further physically by pressing the lever on his chair so that its height suddenly drops.

The second reversal is of gender. Violence is seen as integral to masculinity and as such is normally perpetrated by men against women as a form of control (McCarry, 2007). Here it is reversed as part of carnival where, 'laughter means abuse, and abuse could lead to blows' (Bakhtin, 1981; 24). However, this is not state violence, which is characterised by, 'prohibitions, limitations and always contain an element of fear and intimidation.' (Bakhtin, 1984b; 90), but a playful sort of abuse that Tam (2010: 179) refers to as, 'moments of imaginative violence', which is one of the indicators of carnival-like resistance. It suggests, 'friendly relations' (Bakhtin, 1984a; 16) in which, 'mutual mockery' is permitted (*ibid*.), characterised by elements of bodily interaction. As such, when Smithy states, *'you'd die if you didn't have fun'* he alludes to the contrast between the State violence of death and the re-birth through carnivalesque 'fun' through which fear is defeated and survival is enabled.

This ability of the Case Workers and men to affect each other in an embodied way is also reflected in practical jokes. For example, Debbie mockingly slaps Bob on the back for making fun of her jumper, and when she walks away he fills her woolly hat with ripped up paper (FN 103), Bob sneakily takes a photograph with Smithy's camera for the participatory visual research and is only found out much later (FN 161) and Smithy goes to take the lead out of the back of Terry's computer to *'see if he notices'*, adding with a cheeky smile that, *'bored is not the word'* (FN 432).

However, despite the men's ability to bring down the hierarchy through mockery and remove barriers to re-employment through parody, it is, as Bakhtin (1984b: 10) outlined, only a, 'temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order' and a, 'temporary suspension of all hierarchical distinctions and barriers' (*ibid*.; 15). Once the period of carnival is over, the barriers remain, and therefore it represents only a temporary relief which makes their situation more tolerable. However, while the carnivalesque is temporary, it opens the possibility of reciprocity between the men and their Case Workers which is not currently evident in their relations with the Jobcentre (section 4.2.1.) and employers (section 4.2.6.), thus providing the potential for a more ethical relation. This is explored in the following section.

4.4.3. Reversibility of Perspective

In response to the first question in this chapter, it was noted that the men are unable to protest about their treatment at the Jobcentre, or at least their protests are not heard nor taken seriously. Thus, their relation is nonreciprocal. However, as outlined in the previous section, the men have been able to develop reciprocal relations with their Case Workers at Work Club by their involvement in a universal carnivalesque atmosphere. While the Case Workers are at times sympathetic to the men, such as considering the security questions asked at the Jobcentre *'shocking'* (V2), at other times the men's complaints are dismissed as *'having a whinge'* (V2). Although reversibility is always possible, it is a choice whether to enable the reciprocity which deems the other as worthy of an ethical relation (Johnson, 2008). The final two vignettes outline two examples of reversals of perspective. In the first, the men take a mocking critical perspective on the Case Workers. By blaming the Case Workers for their unemployment, they reverse the blame placed on them by the discourse of welfare reform. In the second example, Debbie reverses her own perspective to "see for herself" from the perspective of the men.

> **V22. 'Professional Advisors' (Greg, Smithy and Debbie)**
> Debbie asks Smithy what would help him with his job search. 'New advisors' he laughs. Debbie is a bit put out and says, 'you can't say we haven't tried'. Greg, who is sat next to Smithy, types, 'Work Club professional advisers' into Google and then points out that in the results the word 'professional' is crossed out. When Smithy sees this he laughs and shakes his head, exclaiming, 'it's even crossed out!'. 'You get what you pay for' snaps Debbie indignantly. Greg then asks Debbie's full name, which she tells him, and he adds it to the search terms. 'I'm a bit freaked out by this' Debbie mumbles. Steph then comes over and Greg and Smithy show her the 'unprofessional' search results. Steph explains in a slightly condescending voice that it just means that they are asking Google to look for those words, and that the crossed-out words are missing from that particular web page. She says it means that they, 'don't know how to use Google', then quickly adds, 'what jobs have you applied for?' Smithy says that he's applied for some. 'Have we given up job searching for today?' Debbie asks. She thinks it's time they had another trip out to hand out CVs. Smithy starts rubbing his leg complaining that it hurts. Debbie tells him that he enjoyed their job-hunting trip last time and tells him to, 'look for jobs, instead of searching for me.'
>
> (FN 390)

Here, a kind of questioning occurs which is prevented by the individualising processes within the Jobcentre. In this example, Smithy and Greg seek to use similar tools to the technology of the surveillance of them (computers/internet) against the Case Workers to reveal their apparent unprofessionalism. Thus, they seek to shift the blame which is placed on them for not becoming re-employed onto their Case Workers for not being good enough at their jobs. This makes the Case Workers uncomfortable (*'I'm a bit freaked out like this'*), and they attempt to return the men to how they are supposed to be spending their time, which is looking for work *('Have we given up jobs searching for today?'*, *'look for jobs, instead of searching for me.'*).

The Case Workers contrast their current *'high stress job'* (FN 781) with previously when, *'it used to be easier'* (FN 266) because if clients weren't performing, they used to be able to *'leave it there'*, whereas now they have to *'carry on'* trying to find them work (Both FN 28). This aligns with the 'creeping conditionality' (Dwyer, 2004: 265) which has resulted from the gradual shift of the welfare state from one of guaranteeing stability and security to the punitive and coercive targeting of excluded populations (Friedli & Stearn, 2015). There is therefore the potential for the Case Workers to be blamed for not achieving the employment 'outcomes' that are the mark of success in their role. For example, Steph says, *'it's only been two years, I've had 75 Smithys on my caseload and no outcomes'* (FN 390), leaving them frustrated and potentially, *'rocking in the corner'* (FN 510), but if the men are blamed instead, they are able to say that it is, *'not my fault, done all I can'* (Debbie – FN 504). However, while the men must continue to comply with job search requirements, the Case Workers must also continue to support them despite their opinion that it is *'pointless'* (FN 305) and a, *'waste of time'* (FN 306) because they are unlikely to find re-employment. This notion of the men spending their time job searching being a waste is a reversal of the view that any time unemployed welfare benefit claimants spend not looking for work is wasting time. This demonstrates that while the Case Workers are able to speak with the voice of the discourse of welfare reform, as outlined in the previous example, they also, at times, enter into dialogue with this monologic perspective and question it. For example:

V23. 'I wanted to see for myself' (Debbie)
Debbie says that she knows that some clients get rid of emails inviting them to interviews because she has logged into their accounts to check and they haven't been clever enough to delete them permanently. This made her wonder if more clients were doing this, so she decided to undertake a bit of an experiment. She created a CV online as if she was an older male jobseeker and started applying for jobs. In six weeks she only got one offer of an interview. She says she knows that what she did is, 'a bit naughty', but she says, 'I wanted to see for myself.'

(FN 231, 309).

In Debbie's story she takes on the role of, 'an older male jobseeker' in order to try and see from the perspective of the men's lived experience. This is undertaken in response to the monitoring of jobseeking (checking client emails) which finds that 'some clients get rid of emails inviting them to interviews' and she wants to find out if the men are also doing this, or whether there is another reason why they are not getting invited to interviews. That Debbie decides to do this in the first place is an indication that she is suspicious of the men. Through this, Debbie uncovers experience which is unacknowledged within welfare reform discourse. As such, she has initiated, and experienced, a reversal of perspective. Although it is not totally possible to coincide with the perspective of another, reversibility is the condition of being able to see from another's perspective. Through this process Debbie is able to see the men as subjects. If the men are not being deviant and deleting emails, then they are not to blame for remaining unemployed, or at least they are not the sole reason. The blame is shifted away from the men and towards employers, hence Debbie's belief that what she has done is, *'a bit naughty'*. It was noted in the Literature Review that one of the key principles of neoliberalism is that, '[c]orporations can do no wrong, or at least they are not to be blamed if they do.' (Mirowski, 2009; 438). Debbie experiences for herself the silence with which the older men are faced from employers when, in six weeks, she only got one offer of an interview. Additionally, the notion that Debbie did something *'naughty'* in revealing this perspective supports their involvement in the carnivalesque. While they must continue to perform their jobs by trying to gain employment outcomes, they are also able to question and pull apart the monologic perspective, alongside the men, thereby themselves moving between compliance and non-compliance.

4.4.4. Summary: *How do long-term unemployed men live through this experience?*

This section has discussed how the men use carnivalesque 'fun' as an embodied survival strategy that dispels the threat and fear of official deadening jobseeking practices, represented as boredom and boring things. Carnivalesque fun is felt in the body by the self and others as it induces laughter as an affect, there are physical affects induced through playful violence and references to the body in grotesque humour (V21). The first part of this section discussed how this strategy became embodied through experience with local industry which also affected the men and they were able to affect in return (V18). While this is *'all gone'* and taken away (V19) it is something the men are able to see and make present due to their attachments to the local environment. This emerged via photographs taken in the participatory visual research. However, this is not an idealised past, but helps them to survive difficult experiences such as work and poverty (V3, section 4.4.1.).

Poverty is also an experience shared between the Case Workers and men which underpins the potential for more ethical recognition of the men's circumstances and thus a reciprocal relation (see section 4.4.1.). Both men and Case Workers participate in carnivalesque parodies of work and school that ridicule the official seriousness of jobseeking practices and notions of work-like control and time. Hierarchical power relations are momentarily destroyed and reversed, including the simultaneous presence of dual aspects such as praise-abuse and compliance/non-compliance, all of which work to temporarily remove barriers to re-employment. In another form of reversal, the Case Workers recognise that it is a waste of time trying to find the men work as they are unlikely to become re-employed (V23). Blame for unemployment thereby becomes fluid, with both Case Workers and men reversing this onto one another (V22).

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has presented twenty-three vignettes based on the men's stories of their lives, as well as numerous snippets of talk. These have evoked lived experiences in relation to each of the three research questions. In most cases

there is a dialogue which allows insight into the purpose of expressions, the emergence of the carnivalesque and the talk between different perspectives representing monoglossia and heteroglossia. The content of each vignette has been discussed within the context of relevant theory. Drawing on this, the following Conclusion Chapter brings together the threads of the experiences presented through the men's stories, relates these to the main theories outlined in the Literature Review Chapter and responds to each of the research questions.

5.0. Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This final chapter addresses the three guiding research questions and aims to draw together the threads that run throughout the men's stories and discuss these within the context of the most relevant literature

The men's interactions with the Jobcentre and digital systems, support existing theories, specifically Foucault's panoptical surveillance (1975/1991: 202) and Goffman's mortification (1957: 49-50). However, there are nuances in the men's interactions, and their lived experience of Work Club is that they are able to undertake sensemaking of their treatment through dialogue. This is enabled through the particular aspects of space, time and history at Work Club that enable collective relations and shared understanding of individual circumstances. These are conditions under which the carnivalesque chronotope (space-time) is able to emerge as an ongoing strategy for surviving the difficulties associated with long-term unemployment. These difficulties include the stigma of contradicting social norms, which are reflected in the metaphors the men perceive as being applied to them, such as being viewed as 'scum', as well as suffering material poverty.

The men's use of metaphorical expressions evoke the lived experience of long-term unemployment as feeling like death. Interpreting this via the overarching framework of social death indicates that this is because homogenisation and stigma finalises their character and they are cut off from broader dialogue about who they are. Various concepts have been used to interpret each metaphor as representing a position that is outside or at the bottom of the social hierarchy. While the men are significantly affected by this, they are able to minimise this impact through denial and ridicule of this social order. Through the carnivalesque they tear down the ideals of the "mind", inherent in the intertwining of employment and social hierarchy, through a material bodily principle of grotesque humour. This ability to temporarily equalise power relations is supported by the Work Club ethos of non-hierarchical relations in which both men and Case Workers negotiate the limits of compliance and non-compliance. Ultimately, the internalisation of self-blame as a requirement of self-governance is reversed onto other causes and, in line with Bakhtin's

(1984b: 90-95) theory, carnivalesque ‘fun’ is able to defeat the social death of long-term unemployment.

These experiences were revealed by adopting a phenomenological attitude of wonder with a commitment to do justice to the phenomenon. While these experiences are specific to a particular context, they underline the importance of understanding from the perspective of individual lived experience, particularly as a challenge to the homogenisation of long-term unemployed people. This builds on existing uses of death and related metaphors to evoke experiences of unemployment as it is lived by tying this to a framework of embodiment via Merleau-Ponty’s theory of expression. By also drawing upon Bakhtin as a lesser utilised theorist in unemployment research, this thesis is able to contribute to the identified gap in knowledge identified by Peterie et al. (2019) regarding jobseeker resistance. Future research should continue to wonder about experiences of unemployment, particularly its embodied and inter-relational aspects which were able to be observed via the methods selected for this ethnography. The carnivalesque ridicules how the men are treated, as expressed through metaphors, and invites wondering about how things could be done differently.

5.2. Research Question 1 – *How do long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?*

The stories the men told in relation to their interactions with the welfare state support those theories set out in the Literature Review. In particular, surveillance and Foucault’s (1975/1991: 202) notion of the see/being seen dyad, and Goffman’s (1957: 49-50) concept of mortification. Most compelling is the extent to which the men themselves recognise these practices being imposed on them and are able to describe them, unprompted, using formal terms, such as time and motion, relating to Taylorism (V1). This also connects to the men’s awareness that many of the processes they are required to submit to are work-like, aligning with the idea that unemployed welfare benefit claimants require such a structure, originating in Jahoda’s (1982) theory of latent deprivation. Again, the men clearly interpret what this says about them: that they are deviant, ‘rough’ and potentially criminal, and thereby in need of control. This deadening finalisation of character supports the monologic

perspective that appears to be embedded within welfare state practices, such as at the Jobcentre (V1, V2) and in the questionnaire (V4), and defines the men as deserving of such punitive treatment. The men acknowledge feeling they must submit to this treatment as to directly resist would only reinforce this perspective (V4).

These processes thereby both hierarchise and normalise by indicating the correct, expected behaviours. The men see themselves as being placed towards the bottom of this hierarchy, with masculinity and age being something they see as factors which position them (V1, V7). The men themselves, with and without the support of the Case Workers, undertake 'othering' (Bradley, 2014) to distinguish themselves from others who they deem as being worse than them, and thus below them in the social hierarchy, including other unemployed people. Their construction of a hierarchy of jobs demonstrates their recognition that many jobs are not open to them, and one of the most prominent reasons they perceive for this is qualifications. Through the carnivalesque they are able to embody jobs (see section 5.2.4.), but the requirement to demonstrate achievements of the mind, through certificates and intelligence, place official limitations on this.

The men's stories indicate that they do not internalise blame for their position and continuing unemployment. In line with the literature, this may be because of the extreme length of their continuous unemployment and therefore they have stopped defining themselves in terms of work and career (Gabriel, Gray & Goregaoker, 2010). However, that the men do not blame themselves conversely enables them to be blamed, as it is seen as evidence of a lack of self-governance and that they are not displaying the right attitude. In particular, they are seen as not demonstrating the desired character traits of aspiration, motivation and being future focussed (see section 2.2.4.) by not having a 'dream job' (V6) and not "wanting it" enough (V8). Nevertheless, alongside this, both the men and Case Workers recognise that it is unrealistic to expect that the men will become re-employed (V6, V9, also section 4.4.3.). It is not overtly recognised within Welfare State practices that the stigma the men are subjected to may mean that they are viewed, as with those perceived to be part of the "underclass", as 'unemployable' (Welshman, 2013). However, the men

indicate that they believe their inability to demonstrate their “true” character to employers through the face-to-face relations they prefer (V3, V8) is a reason why they do not receive a response to their job applications. The value they place on this (V8) emphasises the importance of reciprocal relations which are largely absent from their interactions at the Jobcentre and with employers. Work Club, in many ways, is an exception to this as it provides the opportunity to express experience more openly and undertake sensemaking with Welfare State representatives. The following sections analyse these points in more detail.

5.2.1. Surveillance and the See/Being Seen Dyad

The men’s stories of their interactions with the welfare state regime, both within the Jobcentre and through related online platforms, imply a relation which is precisely defined, strictly controlled and one-way. These processes both define unemployed benefit claimants as potentially deviant and in need of control and enable the smooth running of the welfare system by preventing resistance against it. This reflects numerous aspects of Foucault’s (1975/1991: 201-202) notion of disciplinary procedures. In particular, the notion that visibility ensures order, and that this is most effective when the see/being seen dyad is dissociated through panoptical procedures is evident. In the Jobcentre, the men clearly see themselves being subject to surveillance, through ‘security’, as well as the strict control of space and time (V1, V2). Despite Smithy’s avowal that he can reverse these relations (V2), the men are given little choice within this space but to comply, even when errors are made within the system itself which are not due to action or inaction on their part. As with Mirowski’s (2009; 438) notion that under neo-liberalism corporations are not to blame for economic issues, neither is the State considered culpable. This supports the notion that unemployed people are to blame for their own situation and that this view is embedded in institutional practice.

The men recognise how these practices classify them as deviant and ‘rough’ (V1) and are also aware that if they do not submit to these processes that from an institutional perspective, this deviant nature is confirmed (V4). However, while this demonstrates suspicion that the men are not complying with job search requirements (V2, V23), their ongoing experiences of surveillance mean

this relation is also reversed and the men are constantly suspicious of how they are covertly being subjected to surveillance. According to Foucault's (1975/1991: 201-202) notion of the panopticon, the separation of the see/being seen dyad is when it is most effective, reflected in Fletcher and Wright's (2018: 22) notion of job search tools as digital panopticons. While in the Jobcentre the men are subjected to direct governance and regulation, the uncertainty about whether they are under surveillance outside the Jobcentre induces self-governance. That it later appears to be confirmed that the men's records were being accessed while they were assured that they weren't only strengthens this suspicion (section 4.2.3.). This contrast between overt and covert surveillance is reflected in the men's preference for face-to-face over digital relations (V3). Face-to-face relations allow them to demonstrate their "true" character; that they are honest and trustworthy (section 4.2.6.) and are compliant (V2). In digital systems, relations are hidden (V3) meaning the men are unable to see how they are being perceived, which is experienced as a negative finalisation of character (V4, V8). Thus, in these practices the affect is one-way. The men are unable to affect the operation of these practices which surveil and thus judge them, while these practices clearly affect them.

5.2.2. Mortification

A number of the men's stories outline attempts to provide them with an identity considered appropriate under neo-liberal capitalism, as well as a correct work-like approach and thus to mould them into an appropriate labour supply. The Jobcentre approach to processing clients discussed in V1 and V2 aligns with Goffman's (1957: 49-50) concept of mortification, as the men are not recognised as individuals. As the Advisor they see is not consistent on a weekly basis, they are not known and have to continually prove who they are. They perceive their identification and other information is treated carelessly. The normalisation of certain forms of identity and the disallowance of others is reflected in the questionnaire (V4) with the use of images clearly dictating the socially correct answer. The questions also emphasise perceptions of lack of bodily control, and the connection between physical dirt and lack of morality. Physical appearance is also later seen as a means of exerting control when Simon loses an interview because he doesn't remove his hat (section 4.3.2.). Gist-Mackay's (2018) notion of the disembodiment of job search explains how,

even when jobseekers are looking for work which is more clearly embodied, such as manual labour, they are forced to meet the standards of disembodied work. Neither do the enforcement of such standards recognise the lack of resources which may mean unemployed people struggle to meet them. When the men try to seek work which aligns with their preferences and experience, they are accused of avoiding applying for work (V5) and told to look for more suitable jobs, which are low-level, low-skill roles. This indicates a focus on adjusting labour market supply, particularly for low-level, low-paid roles (Bartelheimer et al., 2012), while reinforcing the notion that unemployment is voluntary because the men appear to be unwilling to accept lower wages (see section 2.2.1.). However, this overlooks the men's inability to achieve such low-level roles, reflected in the tension between having a 'dream job' and being 'realistic' (V6).

5.2.3. Work-like Structure

The notion of mortification alludes to the removal or disallowance of a current identity for the purposes of imposing a new one. Specifically, unemployment is disallowed as an identity, not only via stigma and character finalisation, but through the imposition of a work-like structure. This is rooted in the theory of latent deprivation that arose from the research of Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel (1971/2009: 67) which outlined that time has no meaning for unemployed men, thus emphasising the need for a work-like structure to be implemented. This reasoning has been used to underpin the necessity of active labour market policies and unpopular schemes such as the Work Programme, because they aim to replicate aspects of work. In the sensemaking Terry and Bob undertake in relation to their treatment at the Jobcentre they agree the discipline and surveillance practices are a form of 'time and motion' (V1), related to Taylorism, which aims to account for how time is being used, ensuring that the smallest amount is not wasted. While Dean (1995: 574) has connected Foucault's theory of governmentality with the 'Taylorization [sic]' of unemployment activities, it is interesting that the men themselves recognise and describe this is occurring. Time wasting, reflected in the perception that unemployed people are 'doing nothing' (Boland, 2015a: 17) when they are not looking for work and are thus lazy and idle, is central to the monologic perspective on unemployment, and again enables unemployed people

themselves to blamed for their situation. However, the men in this research do not appear to experience their lives as empty. Again, this may be because they no longer define themselves in terms of work due to the length of their unemployment (Gabriel, Gray & Goregaoker, 2010). Instead, they find the activities they are required to do as jobseekers to fill this time 'boring' (see section 4.4.) and that their time outside of this is spent doing things they enjoy, like going to the Working Men's Club and meeting friends (see V16). In a form of reversibility, the Case Workers view the men searching for jobs as a 'waste of time' (see section 4.4.3.) because they are unlikely to become re-employed. Although Work Club is not an exception to the implementation of work-like structure, the men are able to ridicule this through parody, which is discussed in section 5.4.2.

5.2.4. Hierarchisation

The men both recognise that they are the subject of hierarchisation and take part in hierarchisation themselves. Often the latter is undertaken to refute the position they are placed in by external hierarchisation. Therefore, hierarchy and hierarchical reversal was representative of the power relations reflected throughout the men's experiences. This is linked closely to the findings related to the other two research questions: being placed at the bottom of the social order is deadening (see section 5.3.) and the carnivalesque can be used to deny the ability of this deadening to affect them (see section 5.4.). In the first vignette (V1), the men imply that being older men means they are treated worst at the Jobcentre. The greater potential for men to engage in violence and emotions such as anger (McCarry, 2007) which are disallowed by the welfare system (Peterie et al., 2019), may be seen to justify the need for them to be subjected to greater controls than women. Bob also feels that age is an issue, with younger advisors being most likely to disrespect them (V1). The issue with age is also briefly reflected when Doug is told that he is too old for some of the jobs he has applied for (V7). Bob's comments in particular indicate that he feels they are being placed within a lower hierarchical position than they should be, which through carnivalesque reordering (V1) they are able to refute. Further instances of 'othering' (Bradley, 2014) in which the men are differentiated from other unemployed people are reflected in V4 and V23.

A further form of hierarchisation the men themselves undertake is in relation to the perceived hierarchy of jobs. In both V6 and V7 the men use carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour to 'try on' what might be considered high-level and mid-level jobs respectively. By embodying these jobs the men indicate that there is a bodily 'I can' relating to Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2009: 160) notion of power, and Foucault's use of the word power as, 'to be able to' (Feder, 2013; 56). However, the barriers to these jobs which are perceived by the men to remain are those related to the mind: qualifications and intelligence, which cannot be overcome by a change of mindset, as suggested by Shepherd and Williams (2018). The men both degrade these jobs by defining them as straightforward and easy and temporarily raise themselves to a higher place in the social hierarchy by implying that they could perform these jobs if it weren't for the barriers that remain in place. At the lower level of the men's job hierarchy, there are jobs that no one really wants (V9). Although the men do apply for many low-level roles (see section 4.2.4.), in some cases they place themselves above these roles, utilising the carnivalesque to avoid applying for them (V5). It could therefore be argued that the men are exercising choice. However, refusals to apply only make up a very small proportion of the jobs applied for. Also, since it is extremely rare for the men to be invited to an interview, regardless of where the job they have applied for places in their hierarchy, it could not really be considered a choice between unemployment and re-employment.

Overall, the men appear to view themselves towards the bottom of the jobs hierarchy they create, although not at the very bottom. For example, Smithy sees 'foreigners' as taking the lowest level jobs that nobody else wants (V9). The carnivalesque is a means to refute this placement by framing themselves as being able to perform certain higher roles if external barriers were not in place. In other words, they are able to blame other factors, rather than themselves.

5.2.5. Wanting It

Aligning with Foucault's (1991: 38) notion of discipline, the first stage in preparing for re-employment is for an unemployed person to accept responsibility and internalise blame. That the men do not blame themselves

conflicts with the requirements of self-governance and the rational self and thereby from this perspective they are to blame for being unemployed. This focus on the individual as being the cause for their unemployment preserves the current economic order, enables the smooth implementation of welfare reform policy and places responsibility on individuals to raise themselves out of economic hardship. Individualisation and psychologisation of unemployment is reflected in the Case Workers' belief that the men do not become re-employed because they don't 'want it' enough (V8). The Case Workers seek to resolve this by encouraging the men to display the required positive attitude and thus demonstrate self-governance. Negative emotions are simultaneously disallowed, including psychologising material hardship by defining it as an excuse (see section 4.2.6.).

However, the men's evident satisfaction at receiving a rare personalised employer response to the many job applications they submit (V8) suggests that lack of such positive affect is instead the *result* of their applications being unsuccessful, rather the reason that they are unsuccessful. That this is not acknowledged in welfare discourse and jobseeking practices means that the different and complex situations of the men cannot be addressed. There is some recognition that the men, as older and long-term unemployed need extra support, as this is the reason why this particular Work Club was set up. However, approaches to support are still homogenised to a great extent. For example, the standardised courses provided via the Jobcentre are acknowledged by Case Workers and unemployed alike as useless in facilitating re-employment (V9). Homogenisation also hides the extreme lengths of unemployment that the men have experienced, being two to three decades at the extreme. Existing research such as Oberholzer-Gee (2008) has found that employers assume that the length of unemployment reflects the quality of the candidate. Thus, while this research did not consider the employer perspective, it is notable that the men were not invited to any interview for any paid role during the period of the ethnographic observation. What was clear from the research is how the men are affected by this. Therefore, it must be considered that while the stigmatising effects of governmentality may be successful in compelling the short-term unemployed into employment, it may actively *prevent* the long-term unemployed from getting work. No matter how much the men

‘want’ to become re-employed, or to receive a response, it is a factor which is outside their control.

5.2.6. Being Realistic

While the men are perceived to lack the required character traits of positivity and aspiration, as they are seen to not ‘want’ employment enough (V8) and lack a ‘dream job’ (V6), they are also encouraged to be ‘realistic’ (V6) about their job prospects. This requirement to display the somewhat contradictory traits of being realistic as, ‘abandoning inappropriate expectations’ (Eversberg, 2016) while also remaining motivated has been noted in the existing literature. While “being realistic” may mean aiming for low-level jobs, within the context of what has been discussed so far, the most realistic prospect for the men is that they are unlikely to become re-employed. Even when the Case Workers complete CVs and application forms for the men it does not seem to improve their chances of receiving a response. This means that men are neither compliant nor non-compliant, given that they are meeting the requirements of their welfare contract by continuing to seek employment, yet remain parked within the welfare system. This is something recognised by both the men (V9) and Case Workers (see section 4.4.3.). They have attended all the courses they are able to in the past and they have still not found employment (see sections 4.2.3. and 4.2.6.). From an embodied perspective, their past experience over years of receiving very little response from employers has taught them that the future holds more of the same. This notion that the men occupy an ambiguous and contradictory position will be returned to in section 5.4.7.

5.2.7. Reciprocity

The men’s stories often alluded to reciprocity and nonreciprocity. Reciprocity is defined by Johnson (2008), in line with Merleau-Ponty, as determining another of being worthy of an ethical relation and was notable both in its presence and its absence. Given that not receiving a response from an employer was considered to be the ‘worst part’ of unemployment, and receiving a response, ‘better than getting a job’ (V8, V9), reciprocity matters a great deal to the men. When reciprocity is not possible, the men instead aim to affect others in order to receive a response, whether positive or negative (see section 5.4.5.). One-

way, nonreciprocal relations, such as those within the Jobcentre and with employers, finalise the character of the men and can lead to them feeling anger, resentment and dismay. While the men are enabled to express some of these emotions at Work Club, they more often deny its ability to affect them. This is achieved through statements, such as Smithy's declaration that he is *'not bothered'* if he gets sanctioned (section 4.2.6.), or Simon's affirmation that he is *not* meat (section 4.3.2.). Commonly, their awareness that they are placed towards the bottom of the hierarchy, with regards to jobs and treatment at the Jobcentre, leads them to tear these hierarchies down through carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour.

Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque is that it occurs in a public place where there can be, 'free and familiar contact' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 124) due to all hierarchical barriers being removed. In line with this, the men prefer face-to-face relations (V3), rooted in their history of affecting, and being affected by, local industry (V18). The disembodied process of applying for jobs online does not allow this form of relation. Without a face-to-face relation with employers the men see their character finalised as not being honest or trustworthy (see section 4.2.6.) as they are not enabled to have the '*final word*' (Bakhtin, 1984b: 54) about themselves. The men have very little response from employers about why they have been rejected and therefore it is a one-way relation. In reciprocal relations the men are able to get others to recognise them, such as when Debbie tells Smithy he wouldn't hurt anyone (V4). When these relations are absent, they are able to create them through carnivalesque parody, as with *'Shaz'* leaving a kiss on the email to Terry (V8). These actions enable the men to survive their situation, affirm their subjectivity and experience positive affect.

5.2.8. Summary: *How do long-term unemployed men interact with the welfare state?*

This question sought to understand more about the men's lived experiences of interacting with the welfare state regime as jobseekers. The central difference between the men's interactions is whether there is an opportunity to develop two-way reciprocal relations in which others are able to recognise their perspective. One particular aspect that this research has highlighted in relation to this is the contradictory nature of affect and rules surrounding emotional

control. Practices at the Jobcentre aim to affect the men to comply, but they are not allowed to affect that system in return, such as through complaining or expressing anger. To do so only confirms the finalisation of their character and the necessity of control. The men are expected to display positive emotions towards employers and employment without expectation that this will be reciprocated. However, any display of positive affect which does not relate to work is considered time-wasting and risks the accusation that their life on benefits must be a choice. This idea that emotions can be rationally controlled, and that the absence of this is a reason for unemployment, is unrealistic, especially in the context of the men's experience of continual rejection of their applications for employment, such that they could not realistically hope for re-employment.

The lived experiences of welfare described by the men in this research support the existing literature regarding techniques of surveillance, governance and disallowance of identity. The men's stories allude to how they are finalised as deviant and compelled to comply in an attempt to refute this. This, however, supports the notion that it is necessary for the men to be controlled, contributing to the institutional inertia surrounding punitive welfare policy and practices. Although the solution is posited as re-employment, interaction focusses on that which can be controlled; the men's behaviour. Given that, from a neo-liberal perspective, it is undesirable to attempt to control the market, the men, who are conceived in labour market terms as the 'supply', are compelled to adapt themselves to labour market demand. However, it is clear that pressuring the long-term unemployed to take any job is unrealistic, and that unemployment stigma may actively prevent re-employment. In this situation blaming unemployed people for their unemployment only enables the smooth running of the Welfare system and supports the reproduction of current practices.

A further contradiction inherent in these interactions is that the men are expected to be activated within a system which "deadens" them: Johnson's (2008: 170) term for the refusal of ethical, reciprocal relations. Thus, the notion that the men are "parked" within the welfare system due to the unacknowledged unlikelihood of gaining re-employment, is not a neutral status,

as the term might suggest. Parking recognises the men are at the bottom of the hierarchy of unemployed, and unlikely therefore to become re-employed, yet requiring the same compliance. While compliance is achieved through proving they have completed job applications, suspicion of non-compliance arises from this not resulting in employment. However, this is a factor outside the control of welfare policy, Case Workers and the men.

The exploration related to this first question has therefore revealed that there are nuances in the men's interactions with the welfare state regime and its representatives, although in general these interactions finalise and thus deaden their character. Additionally, the men's experiences demonstrate the importance of reciprocal recognition, such as that occasionally received from Case Workers and other unemployed people, in supporting their sensemaking and survival through other punitive interactions. This highlights the complexity and ambiguity of experiences of long-term unemployment, which are beyond monologic notions of choice, blame and compliance.

5.3. Research Question 2 – *What is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?*

This thesis has outlined four metaphors for what it is like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man. This provides a greater understanding of the impact of welfare reform policy and practices from the perspective of lived experience. Existing research has demonstrated how job loss has been described as death when unemployment is expected to be permanent (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2009), and that death metaphors can evoke the seriousness of how jobseekers are treated, expressed in the metaphor of purgatory (Boland & Griffin, 2018; Griffin et al., 2020). This notion of people who are physically alive feeling as if they are dead has been related in this thesis to the concept of social death. This is due to the centrality of employment to identity according to neo-liberal capitalist social relations, and thus that being an unemployed older man contravenes a number of social norms. This thesis proposes that social death is relevant because each of the metaphors relate not only to death but disciplinary practices of hierarchisation and social ordering. These emphasise that, from the perspective of neo-liberal

capitalism, unemployed people lack a formal place in the social hierarchy and thus are placed at the bottom, or outside, of the social order.

5.3.1. An Embodied Experience

First, it can be concluded that the men experience unemployment bodily, and not just psychologically, as is assumed in activation approaches (Friedli & Stearn, 2015). This emphasises the insight that can be gained through viewing unemployment from an embodied perspective. The metaphors, as expressions of how the men feel treated because they are unemployed, only emerged through spending time with the men in a collective situation in which sensemaking of their experiences was not suppressed but occasionally acknowledged by the Case Workers (V1, V2), as well as by the researcher. The methodology and theoretical framework enabled these metaphors to be connected to one another via the concept of social death. While some embodied memories emerged during the interviews (Smithy shaking his hands, see section 4.4.1.), there were many more examples of this within the field notes (for example, the clicker – V1, leaning over to sign – V2, Bob's reaction to the spider – V11, Steph's reaction to the snake – V12). This was also supported by the visual research which revealed how economic changes had affected the world of the men through the severing of intentional threads related to local employment (V3, V18, V19). These threads also allude to the origin of the carnivalesque as a coping strategy in earlier relations with local industry and its workers (V18). Likewise, the carnivalesque as involving 'all the people' (Bakhtin, 1984b: 8) was only observed in collective situations. This supports the use of the selected methods in accessing embodied lived experiences and looking at stories of unemployment in a different way.

5.3.2. Embodied Sensemaking

This alternative way of looking at unemployment is one that sees beyond the categories, words, approved narratives and outcomes of neo-liberal capitalism. Terms such as activation do not enable those who have not experienced long-term unemployment to understand what it is like. To liken unemployment to death immediately evokes an understanding of what it is like, because physical death is something that everyone is aware of and has experienced in some way. Death, even as a single word, is able to arouse a visceral and emotional

reaction, alluding to the pain, seriousness and finality of a situation in a way other terms are not able to. This is because, as Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 25) identified, metaphorical descriptions turn something abstract into something tangible. As the abstract can cover over material bodily experience, the words used to describe experience are thus extremely important.

In responding to the previous question, it was considered in detail how neo-liberal capitalism protects the economic order by blaming unemployed people for their unemployment. Describing the experience of unemployment as death acknowledges that these processes do not benefit everyone and that in certain cases, they metaphorically "kill" (see section 4.3.3.). This research has revealed that one of the central reasons that this occurs is to disallow identities that do not benefit neo-liberal capitalism by cutting individuals off from the opportunity for the self to be affirmed by others. It is this social death, externally applied, which impedes sensemaking through two-way, reciprocal dialogue. Describing unemployment as death is thereby an appeal for that experience to be understood from a different perspective: that in which economic and supporting State and social processes are neither separate nor politically neutral. The following sections bring together the stories and expressions related to each of the four metaphors to view them as ways in which the men are stigmatised as "lesser" and discusses this within the context of the concept of social death.

5.3.3. Wildness Made Docile

While all four metaphors can be viewed as dualisms (e.g. live/death, clean/dirty, subject/object), animal has the potential to represent a more complex hierarchy due to there being many different types of animal. At a basic level, animals are non-human and thus below humans in the hierarchy. They are also potentially killable, but this depends upon the framed usefulness to, and potential conflict with, human needs. The close connection between metaphorical expression and the everyday, alongside the number of stories told about animals by the informants, enabled the nuance surrounding where animals are placed in the hierarchy and thus how they can be treated to be reflected in the vignettes presented. Each of the stories of parrot, spider, snake and pigeon allude to the tension between wild and docile, compliant and non-

compliant, and body versus mind. Wildness by definition does not fit existing categories in the human social order, and thus represents a threat to that order. Thereby, the lesser treatment of the wild animal is justified by the need to protect the current order.

However, to ensure complete docility, self-governance and self-blame are required. The animal stories indicate that complete docility rarely occurs. Outside the direct control instigated in Jobcentres and Work Club, the men retain the potential to be non-compliant, just as within their own habitats the parrot, snake and spider are wild (V10, V11, V12). It is this potential which justifies suppression in order to force docility. Wider social acceptance of this treatment can be achieved by homogenising the men as part of the unemployed "underclass", as is reflected in examples of applying animal metaphors in order to legitimate political agendas and influence societal opinions which were outlined in the literature (Santa Ana, 1999; Haslam, Loughman & Sun, 2011; Marshall & Shapiro, 2018). While this research did not reveal specific animal metaphors that were applied to the men, the questionnaire (V4) is one example of how wild animal behaviour is assumed to be typical of unemployed and disadvantaged people. Justifying poor treatment through homogenisation is exemplified in the pigeon story told by Smithy (V13). This emphasises how homogenising practices may differentially affect unemployed people as essentially it hierarchises them based on potential value. It thereby also underlines the importance of understanding individual stories of unemployment, and the resources required to be able to tell stories of unemployment that align with a rational self.

5.3.4. Disallowance of Identity

Of the four metaphors, it is only the corpse that retains human-like characteristics. To perceive that you are treated like an animal, meat or dirt is to perceive that you are treated lesser than human. However, while a metaphorical animal has the potential to both be wild and compliant, displaying human-like qualities such as Smithy's parrot (V10), meat and dirt are completely objectified and have no recognised individual identity.
The metaphors of animal, meat and corpse indicate what must be done to be given a place in the social order: to be brought under complete control and

accept being moulded into what is considered to be a suitable identity. This is best reflected in Simon's refusal to be treated as meat, related closely to his dislike of being told what to do (see section 4.3.2.). By not removing his hat Simon is identified as rebellious and loses the opportunity of an interview. By being late he demonstrates he cannot exercise self-control and thus is subjected to tighter governance. As meat, he must allow himself to be processed, chewed up and become waste, or dirt. Dirt is mass outside the social order and only poses a danger to that order if individual identity is revived (Douglas, 1984: 160). The metaphors of meat and dirt also reflect homogenisation and denial of individual identity, which is purposeful in order to protect the existing social order. This denial, or disallowance, of identity are terms which are more reflective of the long-term unemployed experience, rather than the "loss" of identity, which implies individual blame, as termed in the Kralova (2018) social death model.

The process of removing identity is also reflected in the two experiential metaphors that are mediated by death. Both meat and corpse only exist once something that was alive has been killed. The current literature reflects the idea that old economic identities are "murdered" (Chernomas & Hudson, 2009; Grover, 2019), and that those affected view this as, 'sudden death' (Age counts, 2000: 148, quoted in Ainsworth & Hardy, 2009; 1207) because the unemployment this causes is likely to be permanent. Notions of having to leave this old identity behind before re-employment becomes possible also alludes to identity disallowance (see section 2.4.4.1.). While this suggests economic processing, it is also reflected in Goffman's notion of mortification discussed in relation to the men's experiences in section 5.2.2. As mortification occurs within the Jobcentre, it suggests state support for economic processing.

However, it is not only this disallowance of identity which occurs, but the imposition of a stigmatised identity. This is a status in which one is suspended until their economic revival in a different form. This is well reflected in the metaphor of purgatory (Boland & Griffin, 2018; Griffin, Boland, Tuite & Hennessy, 2020) in which jobseekers are suspended until they reach the 'heaven' of work. This thesis has determined that during this period the men are treated as non-persons and non-human animals. Resurrection only occurs

when the old identity is totally gone and a completely controlled identity is adopted, reflected in the notion of meat and corpse.

5.3.5. Absence of Dialogue

The loss, or disallowance, of identity discussed in the previous section relates to the first of the three criteria in Kralova's (2018) model of social death. As loss implies individual blame, this research would suggest that the absence of dialogue is a more appropriate description of this aspect of social death. The men are cut off from dialogue about who they are because a singular stigmatised identity is imposed. This is reflected in the lack of reciprocity received from Jobcentre Advisors and employers (V1, V2, V8, V9). However, there are other situations in which the men are able to engage in more ethical, reciprocal relations. At Work Club, there are instances where the self which is disallowed by neo-liberal capitalism is able to the affirmed by other unemployed people who share a similar situation, and thus social connectedness as Kralova's (2018) second criteria can be maintained in this context. For example, Smithy alludes to shared meaning when he states, regarding his photographs from the visual research, *'These are just photos to you, but to us they're memories'* (FN. 159). Shared meaning is also constructed when dialogue between the informants is used to hierarchise themselves in relation to others (V1, V4). This reflects Turner's (1967: 100-101) notion of the potential for non-hierarchical relations between those experiencing liminality, particularly given Debbie's assertion that she avoids hierarchical relations by not "looking down" on the men (see section 4.4.2.). However, it is also not as simple as this. On occasion both the men and the Case Workers use the monologic perspective against one another and other unemployed people. For example, complaining that Simon is late (see section 4.3.2.), implying Greg is lazy (see section 4.2.3.) and dismissing complaints as *'having a whinge'* (V2). Thus, when dialogue is able to occur it often includes othering, attempts to finalise character and refutation of those attempts. The men are thereby both subject to external classification processes which are imposed on them and take part in classification processes themselves.

5.3.6. ‘Classed’ Practice

It was outlined in the Introduction how embodied research is able to reveal ‘classed’ practices which are neglected by perspectives which ignore bodily, material circumstances (see section 1.2.). While the men’s expression of their experience through metaphors indicated that they are aware of being affected by social ordering and hierarchisation, they did not appear to identity with any existing social class categories. Smithy actively refuted that they are ‘working class’ (see 3.8.1. ‘Informed Consent’). Instead, ‘classed’ practices were revealed as a process of negotiation of position in which the men place themselves and others within a hierarchy. At times they temporarily negotiated higher positions, particularly through carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour (V6) and at others they appeared to accept their given position, framing it as more fun at the bottom, such as choosing hell over heaven (V15). This may be because the men recognise the hierarchy is based on employment, given their own hierarchisation of jobs (see section 4.2.5.), and that their position is likely to be permanent given the difficulties they have experienced in gaining re-employment. However, both of these varied placements involved the men ridiculing the imposed hierarchy and refuting its ability to affect them. Therefore, utilising the concepts of social death and the carnivalesque enables a different way of thinking about inequality which does not draw upon existing social categories, which the men do not see as representing their situation.

5.3.7. Severing of Intentional Threads

The third and final category in Kralova’s (2018) social death model is losses associated with the body. The Literature Review outlined how the body is affected by long-term unemployment (see section 2.4.4.5.) and how poverty and hunger have a detrimental bodily impact. While some of the men had serious health issues, both physical and mental (V9, V15, V16), they were able to do what those in earlier models of social death were not: to describe their own experience as being like death. For example, Sweeting and Gilhooly (1997) based their research on care-givers perceptions of social death. While in some cases it may not be feasible for the sufferer to explain their experience, this thesis supports the need to consider their perspective, where possible. In particular, social death arises due to the person being externally defined as a

non-person and thus it seems unethical that the decision of whether social death has occurred should also be made on the basis of an external assessment.

A further way in which the social death experienced by the men is linked to physical deterioration is through the stories the men tell about their own deaths (V14, V15, V16). These suggest that physical death will end their current suffering as after death they will be in better place that is more fun, and they will have more control over what happens to their body and what people think of them. The men's discussions of funerals as a time of celebration, eating, drinking and undertaking activities that reflect the personality of the dead person (V16) enable them to think ahead to how they themselves want to be remembered and thus have a continued social life after physical death. Intentional threads are preserved through physical reminders such as a photograph on the Club wall (V16) and Bob's body contributing to science (V14), as well as memories of embodied carnivalesque 'fun' at funerals such as laughter and mud wrestling (V16). This contrasts with the severing of intentional threads the men have experienced in life, such as potential futures taken away from them through economic restructuring (see section 4.4.1.). Thus, if a person feels that social death has occurred, to deny them the opportunity to describe their experience in these terms only compounds that experience. Undertaking this research from the embodied perspective has emphasised the need to understand bodily damage and trauma as occurring in more than just the most extreme circumstances and thereby calls for social death to be recognised beyond the limits imposed by Kralova (2018).

5.3.8. Summary: *What is it like to experience long-term unemployment as an older man?*

Unemployment is an experience which is felt within, and expressed by, the body. The use of metaphors in these expressions has found that long-term unemployment feels like death, with the embodied research approach enabling the observation of the use of these metaphors through collective sensemaking. Death evokes the lived experience of long-term unemployment and calls upon others to understand the seriousness of its bodily impact. It is thus an invitation

to enter into a reciprocal, ethical relation with unemployed people by viewing the experience from their perspective.

While there is theoretical support that social death has occurred, the men's situation proposes some amendments to the Kralova (2018) social death model. Firstly, that describing former identity and dialogue as disallowed rather than lost shifts blame away from those individuals experiencing social death. Secondly, that suffering cannot be accurately compared and so, while criteria may be useful in supporting a theoretical understanding of social death, individual experiences and perspectives should be taken into account when assessing whether social death has occurred.

The animal metaphor in particular is a reflection of the attempt at control imposed through social death. It refers to the notion that the long-term unemployed are lesser than human and thus deserving of lesser treatment. This is supported by homogenising the unemployed men as wild, and thus needing to be brought under control. It also alludes to the mind/body dualism inherent in the experience of unemployment. The men are framed as requiring bodily control (V11) and forced into a framework which prioritises the mind meaning that they face barriers to work such as qualifications, intelligence and disembodied job application processes. Understanding this from the men's perspective highlights the refusal of reciprocity that is inherent in social death. In other words, if individual perspective and experience is recognised as valid, then social death does not occur, and conversely, if broader social practices deem that an individual is not worthy of an ethical relation then it is likely that the criteria for social death will be met. This emphasises that these concerns, closely connected to objectifying others as a non-human or non-person, should be fundamental considerations within the concept of social death.

5.4. Research Question 3 – *How do long-term unemployed men live through this experience?*

If, for the men, to experience long-term unemployment is like death, then carnivalesque laughter and grotesque humour enable that death to be overcome. While the typical view of death is as an ending, a finalisation or a cut-off point, Bakhtin's (1984b; 53) notion of death in the carnivalesque is that it

is pregnant and able to give birth to something new and better. Death is thus the opportunity for renewal by bringing back to life that which has been killed and doing so on its own terms. As such, it is not the digging up of the corpses of the unemployed represented in the parody of Burke of Hare (V14) but a return to, and a continuity with, the past. Thus, the history erased by neo-liberal capitalism, including those aspects it does not value such as collective relations and identities, is resurrected in a way that is not normally enabled. The carnivalesque itself is a connection to the past, given it is a strategy which has been previously used by the men within the context of their industrial past (V18) and therefore is viewed in line with theories that provide an understanding of how habitual strategies enable coping (Pylavanainen, 2003; Behnke, 2012). Thus, the carnivalesque provides an assurance that the men can make it through current difficult times because they have done so in the past.

As Bakhtin's theory alludes to the carnivalesque as defeating death, Smithy notes the ability of 'fun' to oppose death (V14) and thus, 'fun' is likened to the carnivalesque. It is the power of laughter to dispel fear (Bakhtin, 1984b: 90) that is characteristic of the men's strategies for survival. This is both in the past, such as Smithy's notion of childhood as being, 'dragged up' (V3) relieved through the playing of practical jokes on local workers (V18), and in the present, given that the, 'depressing' (V17) nature of other's opinions can be alleviated through parody, practical jokes and playful violence (V6, V10, V11, V14, V19, V20). As such, the serious effects of social death, as reflected in the metaphors outlined in section 5.3., can be defeated and denied. This victory is reflected in Smithy's declaration that, *'you'd die if you didn't have fun'* (FN 668). Thus, the men can recognise, and even on occasion accept, their positioning towards the bottom of the social hierarchy, as its power to affect them can be defeated through laughter. In the following sections the carnivalesque is outlined as a form of everyday resistance which has a dual aspect that enables both compliance and non-compliance. This is viewed, in general, as resistance against the requirements of neo-liberal capitalism as it is reflected in welfare reform and social practices that support the preservation of the current order.

5.4.1. Carnivalesque Chronotope

The first way in which the carnivalesque is able to resist the requirements of neo-liberal capitalism is through a collective, rather than individual relation. As has been noted, practices within the Jobcentre individualise unemployed people through rules such as separate appointment times and *'No Waiting'* (V1), with Foucault (1975/1991: 201) noting that this separation is vital to avoid collective resistance. Neither can the carnivalesque, as a form of resistance, emerge individually (Bakhtin, 1981: 239), with Bakhtin (1984b: 18-19) noting that this is why the carnivalesque is lacking in individualistic modern cultures. The shared aspect of space and time at Work Club as well as the sharing of similar past experiences within the local area by those who attend Work Club enabled the carnivalesque to emerge. Although this past is gone (V3, V19) it can be made present through embodied memories. Work Club not only takes place within the men's world, it being within the vicinity of where they live, grew up and formed these memories, it is also in a public place. Bakhtin (1981: 159-160, 240) emphasised how the public square is the place of the people, in which their rules apply, including that such public relations have no interiority. It is a space which challenges the rational self as a controlled external expression of an internally crafted identity because all relations are collective and external. Thus, the shared aspect of space and time, through growing up together in the local area is a particular chronotope (space-time) that facilitates the emergence of the carnivalesque.

The carnivalesque also challenges the neo-liberal capitalist notion of coping with unemployment as an individualised, psychological activity in which the past must be let go in order to move on (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014). Conversely, when related to the carnivalesque, survival is specifically collective and bodily (V3, V19). Debbie's embodied understanding through her own experiences means she is able to recognise and affirm the men's circumstances. This may underpin her decision to avoid hierarchical relations and thus illuminate, rather than deaden, the condition of reciprocity (Johnson, 2008). Thereby, Work Club not only contrasts with the men's stories about the Jobcentre (V1, V2) because collective dialogue and sensemaking is allowed, but that the Case Workers themselves join in and support the men in analysing their treatment. This is a dialogue that represents different voices and

perspectives, with Case Workers both using official voices and criticising the monologic perspective (e.g. V2: *'having a whinge'/'shocking'*, V20), and men appropriating official voices in a dual aspect that both supports and tears down the existing hierarchy through ridicule (e.g. V21: *'If you want any help…I'll just be over here chatting'*). This is fuelled by the particular circumstances at Work Club in which it is difficult to homogenise the men because they are known as individuals (V4, V21). This interweaving of criticism and support is an example of dialogized heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981: 273), which is able to pull away from the official, singular and monologic perspective upon unemployed people.

5.4.2. Disembodied Boredom

A second way in which the carnivalesque resists neo-liberal capitalism is by ridiculing the notion of work which is enforced through jobseeking practices. This is achieved by the informants via appropriating relevant terms and using them mockingly through short parodies. These parodies are based both on employment and the supporting educational structures that the men view as a particular barrier to their re-employment: work and school (see V6 and section 4.4.2.). The words of the informants utilised in these parodies imply that the men are thoroughly compliant and under control, yet that they are spoken in a mocking tone, by both men and Case Workers, undermines this as an illusion. Parody is able to destroy official truth by transforming it into flesh (Bakhtin, 1984b: 20, 39). Thus, work as an abstract ideal in which the mind triumphs over the body is reversed through parody. Instead, work as disembodied and individualist is positioned as boring, and can only be overcome through embodied relations as 'fun'. This is reflected in work history, such as Bob moving from a job where he worked on his own to one working with others because it was *'more fun'*, as well as in the broader notion that 'fun' counteracts the boredom of Work Club (see sections 4.4. and 4.4.1.). Thus, both employment and unemployment are something that needs to be survived, and the carnivalesque supports both of these. This is achieved by bringing the hierarchy down through degradation and debasement.

5.4.3. Fundamental Sameness

The insertion of the body into disembodied situations, such as at Work Club, is also able to temporarily equalise relations in a way that affirms the self by using grotesque humour. Focussing on the lower bodily stratum emphasises both being alive and the sameness inherent in lived experience, such that everyone needs to eat, drink and defecate in order to remain living. Physical death is also something that everyone will eventually experience. Thus, the inequality which neo-liberal capitalism creates, particularly relating to the men's concerns through education (V6), is flattened by a crude notion of fundamental sameness. This is realised through a double movement in which high is brought low and low is brought high, such as when the men degrade jobs which require higher qualifications through grotesque humour (V6). Towards the end of this vignette, Smithy claims, *'I could do that'* and Bob disagrees because for such jobs you, *'need an IQ'* (V6). This emphasises how embodying these jobs is a form of power defined in Foucault's terms as, 'to be able to' (Feder, 2013; 56) and Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2009: 160) as, 'I can'. Through the grotesque the body is one with the world and boundaries are destroyed, albeit only temporarily as it is Bob's reference to the "realistic" nature of requiring qualifications and intelligence to perform these roles, indicating that the men do not have them, which terminates this episode of the carnivalesque by asserting the official perspective. However, through hierarchical switching the men are able to affirm the self by revealing that these barriers to re-employment lie in the hierarchy, rather than with them, as they assert that they could do these jobs, if they were enabled to.

5.4.4. Defeating Death

The metaphorical death that was discussed in relation to the previous question is one-way in that it is imposed and is aims to be final. This is because it finalises the character of the men through stigma, and resurrection can only occur through re-employment, which for them is unrealistic. It is a relation which is purposefully nonreciprocal because it aims only to affect the individual and refuses recognition until they comply, as reflected in the discussion of the metaphors (see section 5.3.4.). The carnivalesque as it was used by the men responded to this in two ways: it enabled them to assert the inability of social

death to affect them and also supported them to affect others, and thus receive confirmation that they are alive.

To describe an experience in terms of death clearly evokes that it is unpleasant. Interpreting this in line with social death as a form of ostracism, unemployment is enforced in this way in order to ensure compliance through re-employment. However, this requires internalisation of blame which motivates the individual to correct themselves through self-governance. Although the men recognise some of the negative affect related to this death, they largely verbally denied its intended affect and did not appear to blame themselves for being unemployed. Instead, they utilised grotesque and carnivalesque reversals that reflected Bakhtin's (1984b: 90-95) notion of the ability of laughter to defeat fear, power, violence and death. Hell, as a place of punishment to be feared, is defeated when it is infused with eating, sexualised women and 'fun' (V15). Blame shifting is also achieved through the carnivalesque suggestion that Case Workers are unprofessional because they have not yet found the men jobs (V22). While this latter example is brought back to earth through the assertion of the official voice telling the men that they must look for jobs, it emphasises how the carnivalesque is able to momentarily reverse the negative characterisation of the men as to blame for their own situation.

5.4.5. Ability to Affect

Another action through which the men defeat death is by forcing dialogues and reciprocal recognition that is absent in one-way relations of death. Broadly, the concept of social death includes loss of social connectedness (Kralova, 2018) which was discussed in section 5.3.5. within the context of absence of dialogue. This means that whilst individuals are rarely totally cut off from all forms of social relation, there are limits placed on the ability to enter into dialogue around disallowed identities in certain situations. This is reflected in the men's apparent inability to affect employers with their job applications (V8, V9), which has a clear affect upon them as it is seen as the 'worst part' of being unemployed. Based on Johnson's (2008) notion of reciprocity, the men's interpretation appears to be that the employer does not enter into a reciprocal relation with them because they are not recognised as being worthy of a response due to perceived character flaws (see section 4.2.6.). In the face of

this deadening finalisation of character, the men undertake numerous actions to confirm their ability to affect others and thus affirm that they are socially alive rather than socially dead. This includes parodies that create close social relations (V20 – bad bridesmaids) and positively affirm the self (V8 – Sharon) as well as responses more typically considered to be negative. For example, Smithy's assertion that he finds it funny *'when I get hit'* (V21), transforms violence as a typically negative response into carnivalesque playful violence as affirming that Smithy has successfully affected Steph. This is not necessarily a fully reciprocal nor ethical relation, as Johnson (2008) defines it, because it does not involve recognition that the men are worthy of such a relation. However, it allows the men to consider themselves as worthy of a response when they understand from past experience that they are unlikely to receive one.

5.4.6. See for Yourself

As has been outlined, Work Club has enabled the Case Workers to get to know the men as individuals, and thus they differentiate between the men and 'other' unemployed people, such as those who hurt others (V4) and delete emails inviting them for interviews (V23). While it is normally the men who instigate carnivalesque hierarchical switches (V6, V21), the final vignette sees Debbie take on the identity of an older long-term unemployed man so that she can see more directly from their perspective (V23). As Debbie only receives one offer of an interview, the men's accounts are confirmed as the truth of their situation rather than the monologic perspective that they are to blame for their unemployment. That Debbie is not supposed to undermine the official system in this way is reflected in her statement that what she did was, *'a bit naughty'*. However, this also creates a problem for the Case Workers in which they must continue to support the men's job search while also knowing the futility of this. The notion that unemployed people waste time when not focussing on finding work turns into job searching becoming a waste of time. Work Club thereby almost becomes a parody of itself in which all present recognise the uselessness of the activities they are undertaking yet are compelled to continue due to homogenised requirements of what compliance looks like. Technically the men are complying if they demonstrate they are undertaking job search (V2) but to be fully compliant is to leave the system altogether through

employment. For the Case Workers their role is to support the men's job searching but their success is measured by employment outcomes which are rarely achieved. Thereby neither the men nor Case Workers are fully fulfilling their obligations despite filling their time in the required way. It is the comic, ridiculing aspects of the carnivalesque that reveal the farcical nature of jobseeking requirements, and thereby provide temporary freedom from feeling the shame that is meant to be induced by non-compliance.

5.4.7. Carnivalesque as a Safety Valve

Based on these interpretations, the carnivalesque cannot be considered a 'safety valve' (Grindon, 2004: 153) that enables controlled non-compliance to ensure compliance the remainder of the time. This is because it is not under the Case Workers' control when carnival arises, and they only sometimes determine when it dissipates. However, it is clear that there is no possibility for such carnivalesque relations with the men's interactions at the Jobcentre (V1, V2) and that it is the particular relations of space-time which enable the carnivalesque to emerge at Work Club. That the men are able to affect the Work Club Case Workers, who officially represent the monologic perspective, bring them into dialogue and influence them to see from their perspective is a form of reversibility not normally allowable within the Jobcentre. Additionally, both sides recognise that full compliance isn't possible, thereby blurring the boundary between compliance and non-compliance.

In line with the literature review, this reflects a relational view of power in which compliance and resistance are simultaneous and inseparable (King, 1997) and freedom is a continual negotiation (Mendieta, 2013). Similarly, although reversals and switching of position from top to bottom are inherent in the carnivalesque, it also allows pairings and as such has a dual aspect (Bakhtin, 1984b: 256). This allows relations which are normally dualistic and opposed in an "either/or" relation to be directly present at the same time and even in the same actions. Examples of this include death/re-birth and praise-abuse (*ibid*.: 161). At Work Club, compliance and non-compliance can occur in the same action as they are both filling in job applications and mocking them at the same time. The ideal of the rational self, represented in the control of mind over body and formal qualifications, is reversed and body is asserted over mind as "more

fun". It is a temporary bursting of wild nature that reveals the hidden experience behind official truth. That this is undertaken in a laughing tone, and quickly dissipates means that it is able to achieve its disrupting and self-affirming aims without being deemed as non-compliance. This aligns with Scott's (1985) theory of everyday resistance in which small acts, including different forms of compliance, are able to relieve oppressive conditions.

At the start of this section, it was suggested that the carnivalesque resists neo-liberal capitalism as the general principles that underpin the discourse of welfare reform. The opposing view would be that the men are resisting re-employment, although their lack of success and Debbie's experiment (V23) would suggest that this is not the case, or at least it is not that simple. Neither are the men resisting jobseeking practices per se. Although carnivalesque fun provides temporary relief from the boredom induced by disembodied job searching, the men must ultimately comply or risk losing their welfare benefit payment through sanction. This research suggests that the carnivalesque supports the resistance of being fully externally defined and controlled, as reflected in the metaphorical expressions and the concept of social death. By denying the ability of deadening to affect them they are able to see the falseness which is also part of each finalisation, and claim their, 'right to be "other" in this world' (Bakhtin, 1981: 159).

5.4.8. Summary: *How do long-term unemployed men lived through this experience?*

This research found that the men live through the deadening experience of long-term unemployment through carnivalesque 'fun' which they have developed as a habitual survival strategy through local relations, including those with industry (V3, V18, section 4.4.1.). As the carnivalesque can only occur collectively, it is the particular circumstances of Work Club that support its emergence. Specifically, at Work Club they are seen as individuals, differentiated from the mass of other unemployed people (V4, V23). Debbie's commitment not to hierarchise the men (see section 3.6.1.) also supports the carnivalesque as being able to temporarily flatten the social order. This allows "high" jobs, that rely on qualifications and intelligence that the men see themselves as not possessing, to be brought down under the material bodily

principle. This emphasises the fundamental sameness which is the basis of all lived experience, challenging the notion of being a 'non-person' through loss of personhood, and ridiculing jobseeking practices as pointless. As the men are unlikely to escape their current position in the social order, they use the carnivalesque to frame it as being more fun at the bottom, thus allowing them to temporarily alleviate its negative effects on them.

Through the carnivalesque the men are also able to defy the imposed social death by demonstrating its inability to negatively affect them. This is not only stated but achieved through creating and forcing dialogues and reciprocal recognition that deems them worthy of a response. Alongside this they also reverse this affecting relation onto others through invoking carnivalesque laughter and playful violence. Together these affirm that the men are not socially dead but fully alive. This, alongside their ridicule of jobseeking practices and recognition that they unlikely to become re-employed, means that they are able to recognise, 'the falseness of such an approach' (Bakhtin 1984a: 58). They are thus able to disregard the official perspective as it relates to the self because they can see beyond it.

5.5. Limitations

In addition to the research limitations outlined in section 3.9., there are some limitations to the extent that this research has been able to address the research questions. While these do not lessen the potential impact of this research, they should be borne in mind when interpreting what has been presented.

The first research question, focusing on interactions between the men and those enforce and monitor their compliance with the terms of their welfare contract, noted nuances to the extent that reciprocal relations are enabled. However, it was not possible to directly observe the men's time at the Jobcentre due to research restrictions and thus, only those interactions at Work Club represent immediate lived experiences, whereas others were told as stories. Likewise, time restrictions and ethical considerations meant that other aspects of the men's lives could not be directly observed. Despite this, a rich

level of experiential material, including sensemaking of other lived experiences, was produced.

Each research question has been responded to on the basis of very specific circumstances, including the past history of the area and people, as well as their established relations. However, essentially, this is the nature of qualitative and ethnographic research, particularly with regards to lived experience. In other words, there will always be differences in lived experiences, including amongst other older long-term unemployed men, and this thesis has analysed particular lived experiences within a particular context. Likewise, how the men live through and survive this experience is based on their specific history, and the theory as applied is aligned with this.

There is potential that the current political and social perspective on unemployed people may have altered from the extreme stigma presented in this thesis due to the increase in unemployment during the coronavirus pandemic. Although UK policy changes designed to prevent unemployment during the associated economic recession, particularly the furlough scheme, have begun to be explored in the literature, it is not yet known whether there will broader and long-term implications for how unemployed people are viewed and treated. Alongside this, there are other ways in which future research could build upon the research undertaken for this thesis which are discussed in the following section.

5.6. Potential for Further Research

This research has emphasised the importance of metaphors to understanding and evoking lived experiences of unemployment. This was supported by adopting an embodied perspective that recognises metaphorical expression as reflecting bodily experience and thus encourages the value of adopting this approach.

Research into lived experiences of unemployment provides an important challenge to the monologic neoliberal perspective as it able to reveal the significant impact of workfare and activation policy on the lives of individual jobseekers and people living on welfare. While the coronavirus pandemic has

brought some of these issues to prominence, prompting governments to address this through curtailing requirements and increasing welfare payments (McGann, Murphy & Whelan, 2020), previous large-scale crises indicate that such questioning is only temporary (see section 2.2.1.). While the lack of conceptions of agency and choice have impeded research into resistance by unemployed people (Egdell & Beck, 2020), this has begun to be addressed through the research of lived experience. This thesis provides a different theoretical interpretation of the violence, dehumanisation and physical harm identified in other research into the lived experience of unemployed welfare benefit claimants, such as by Redman and Fletcher (2021). By investigating participants' own rationales, lived experience research has been able to reveal unemployed claimants, not as passive victims, but as engaging in small acts of resistance (Peterie et al., 2019; Redman, 2021) while maintaining an appearance of compliance deemed necessary for survival (Whelan, 2020). A further emerging theme in lived experience research which this thesis aligns with is the importance of the case worker relationship in lived experiences of jobseeking and welfare. The jobseekers in Redman's (2021) research argued that case workers enforcing punitive approaches made small acts of resistance necessary, with the dual role of case workers in both helping and punishing claimants being described by Peter and Polgar (2020) as the Caseworker Paradox. This aligns with the differences in relation between unemployed men, case workers and Jobcentre workers, as outlined in this thesis.

While there remain recognised gaps in the literature regarding jobseeker resistance (Peterie et al., 2019) that this study will contribute towards, it would be valuable to extend this beyond the context of this research. In particular, it would be useful to understand the extent to which unemployed people and jobseekers adopt strategies of carnivalesque survival. Despite this research focussing on older men, gender and age were not explored in as much depth as other aspects and therefore future research could build upon this with an aim to contribute to the lack of research into how poverty affects the construction of masculinities, aligning with recent investigations of lived experience, such as Qambela (2021). Further research could also build upon the notion of long-term unemployment as social death to determine whether a broader range of people may define their experience in such terms.

Finally, this research indicated that the employer perspective was an important influence in the men's lives which was not directly explored. This is particularly important for those suffering extreme lengths of long-term unemployment as the men in this study were, in order to understand the impact of homogenisation and stigma of unemployed people. While it was not an aim of this study it is hoped that such future research could influence unemployment and welfare policy and encourage further extension of addressing individual needs which sees beyond the dualistic notion of compliance and non-compliance.

5.7. Conclusion

This thesis has determined that living through long-term unemployment as an older man feels like death due to character finalisation, meaning that the men see themselves as being deemed unworthy of a response from employers. The negative stigma that homogenises unemployed people and excludes the men from the social order until they can demonstrate complete control are the most deadening aspects of this experience. While there is a strong case for the experiences of the men to be recognised as social death within existing conceptions, this interpretation originates from the appeal made by the men themselves via metaphorical expressions of death. This emphasises the need to allow alternative stories of unemployment to be heard and to recognise how individuals define their own experience. This analysis contributes to the existing literature regarding death metaphors by using an embodied perspective and relating this to the concept of social death.

While the deadening discourse of welfare reform is not completely absent from the Work Club that formed the context for this research, to a certain extent it represents how things could be different. It diverges from the men's interactions with Jobcentre systems as it provides opportunities for collective sensemaking and affirms the self through Case Workers who are willing to enter into a reciprocal, ethical relation with them by seeing from their perspective. This supports the men in recognising that social death is not total. In effect, they are only "dead" to capitalist requirements and its associated

social relations. However, as monoglossia and heteroglossia are movements continually pulling away from one another, this position is never finalised.

The men's stories and expressions also speak of how carnivalesque laughter enables the negative affect induced by their social positioning to be dispelled. The carnivalesque is a means of creating temporary power and possibility by equalising relations and is able to affirm the self through an ability to affect others. This does not mean that the loss and trauma of long-term unemployment is overcome, but it enables survival and acceptance that they are unlikely to regain employment. The extremely long-term nature of the men's experiences of unemployment emphasise that experiences of unemployment cannot be homogenised and that it is a nuanced and ambiguous experience. The richness of the material gathered for this ethnography has supported a contribution to the identified gap in knowledge about jobseeker resistance. This research has proposed that through the carnivalesque the boundary between compliance and non-compliance is blurred, enabling the men to resist character finalising and control over their lives.

However, in a true dialogical narrative sense, it is not possible to completely finish a consideration of lived experience as, although this ethnography ends, the informants go on living their lives. While the stories told represent a particular moment, they also encourage the capacity to see beyond this. The focal point for this is the notion of "long-term" unemployment, extending not only into the past, but also into the future. That some of the men have already lived through decades of deadening practices of finalisation and control, is an appeal to address the inequality created by neo-liberal capitalism, reflected in Merleau-Ponty's (1964b: 131) call to create, 'a life which is not unliveable for the greatest number.' This research has emphasised the importance of reciprocal recognition that is able to see from varied perspectives of lived experiences of unemployment while also acknowledge the fundamental sameness of people as human, regardless of their economic status.

Appendix 1: Typology of Stories

Existential Theme	Theme	Stories	Summary of relevant Bakhtinian Theory
Corporeality	Survival	What it's like being unemployed	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue)
		Animal metaphor	Monoglossia/Tragedy Genre
		Work on the side	Heteroglossia
	Embodiment	Personal experiences of work	Chronotope (space-time)
		Experiences of job loss	Chronotope (space-time)/Monoglossia/Tragedy Genre
		Childhood experiences	Chronotope (space-time)
	Age	Young 'uns	Chronotope (space-time)/Tragedy Genre
		Perceptions of age and 'old'	Chronotope (space-time)/Tragedy Genre
	Masculinity	It's a Masculine Club	Monoglossia
		Hiding/expressing emotions	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue)
	Health	Avoiding benefit change	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue)
Relationality	Social hierarchy	Hierarchising tendencies	Monoglossia/Reversibility
	Caring	Caring for others	Epic Genre
	Trust	Suspicion re. accessing accounts - Panoptical surveillance	Heteroglossia
		Conspiracy theories and superstition	Heteroglossia
		Trust	Heteroglossia
		Stealing or bending the rules	Heteroglossia
	Client-Case Worker	Client-Case Worker Relationship	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia
		Coping/Survival - smoking, drinking, better	Chronotope (space-time)/Tragedy Genre
		Being skint	Chronotope (space-time)/Tragedy Genre
		Living Conditions	Chronotope (space-time)/Tragedy Genre
	Affect	Do you talk about us?	Heteroglossia/Reversibility

Spatiality	Living conditions	The Council	Chronotope (space-time) - "Local"
		Local area	Chronotope (space-time) - "Local"
		Local criminals	Chronotope (space-time) - "Local"
		Local Jobs/Travelling outside the area	Chronotope (space-time) - "Local"
		The Club	Chronotope (space-time) - "Local"
		Being a geordie/from 'round here'	Chronotope (space-time) - "Local"
		Tower Blocks (just modernised)	Chronotope (space-time) - "Local"
Temporality	Welfare State	Useless Courses	Monoglossia/Tragedy Genre
		Volunteering	Monoglossia
		Jobcentre	Monoglossia/Tragedy Genre
		Find a Job	Monoglossia
	Applying for Jobs	It's like Work	Carnivalesque/Parody Genre
		It's like School	Carnivalesque/Parody Genre
		Applying for anything	Monoglossia
		Not Getting a Response	Monoglossia/Tragedy Genre
		What Chance have we got	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue) Tragedy Genre
		Case Workers applying/bending the truth	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue)
		It's hopeless	Monoglossia/Tragedy Genre
	The right attitude	The Perfect Jobseeker (norm)	Monoglossia/Epic Genre
		Do they 'want' to be employed (choice)	Monoglossia
		Doing what they're told	Monoglossia
		Ambition	Monoglossia
		Intensive job searching - parody	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue) Parody Genre
		Emotions they don't feel	Monoglossia
		Could I do that? (can you see me)	Monoglossia/Reversibility
	Control of Time	Today? Can I leave early?	Monoglossia

	Memories	Work (see embodiment)	Chronotope (space-time)/Carnivalesque
		Progress	Monoglossia
Freedom and Death	Discipline	Disciplining each other	Monoglossia
		Biopower	Monoglossia
		Compliance	Monoglossia
	Choice	So you don't get stitched up	Monoglossia
		Finalising/being finalised	Heteroglossia/Carnivalesque
	Gotta Have a Laugh	Boring/Gotta have a laugh	Carnivalesque Chronotope/Reversibility
		Jokes	Carnivalesque Chronotope
		Practical Jokes	Carnivalesque Chronotope
		Grotesque	Carnivalesque Chronotope
		Laughter and misfortune	Carnivalesque Chronotope
		Playful Abuse	Carnivalesque Chronotope
	Parody	Of 'Clients'	Heteroglossia/Parody genre
		Of Jobs	Heteroglossia/Parody genre
		Of Case Workers	Heteroglossia/Parody genre
		Of Work	Heteroglossia/Parody genre
	Reversibility	You don't do anything ‘wasting time’	Reversibility (Irony Genre)/Heteroglossia
		The men would do a better job	Reversibility (Irony Genre)/Heteroglossia/Epic Genre
	Death	Those who don't comply will be 'killed' (metaphor)	Monoglossia/Tragedy Genre
		Funerals	Carnivalesque
		Dying and Afterlife	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue)
		Haunting	Monoglossia/Heteroglossia (Dialogue)
Number of Themes/Stories	22	71	

Appendix 2: Individual Informed Consent Form

Faculty of Business and Law
Informed Consent Form for research participants

Title of Study:	The lived experience of older unemployed men
Person(s) conducting the research:	Helen Tracey
Programme of study:	PhD
Address of the researcher for correspondence:	Newcastle Business School Northumbria University
Telephone:	0191 227 4664
Email:	helen.tracey@northumbria.ac.uk
Description of the broad nature of the research:	The aim of the research is to find out about the experience of older men with industrial/manual working histories who are currently unemployed. Specifically it aims to find out how these men see the world around them, how they respond to being unemployed, how they perceive and respond to the Welfare State and who they see themselves to be.
Description of the involvement of participants including the broad nature of questions to be answered or events to be observed or activities to be undertaken, and the expected time commitment:	The researcher will observe unemployed older men undertaking training and unemployment activities for 2 hours per week for up to one year. The researcher will take 'Field Notes' of the conversation topics, body language and job search activities of the Job Seekers and their 'Case Workers'. Where necessary the Researcher will ask questions related to activities and conversation topics of the Job Seekers e.g. seek clarification. **For Visual Research Participants:** Participants will be asked to spend a month taking photographs that illustrate what it is like to be unemployed. The photographs will then be discussed during a semi-structured interview. The participant will be asked to describe what the photographs mean to them. They will also be asked questions about their life and their experiences of unemployment in line with the research aims above.
Description of how the data you provide will be securely stored and/or	Field notes will be anonymous (no real names or locations recorded). At all times those individuals referred to in the Field notes (and subsequently in other documents) will be given pseudonyms

destroyed upon completion of the project:	(not their real names) and where necessary certain details regarding those individuals may be changed in order to protect their identity. Notebooks containing Field notes will be locked in the Researcher's desk. Field notes will be typed up and saved in a password protected file system on a password protected computer, whereby only the Researcher knowns the password. Signed consent forms (i.e. this form) will be kept separately in a locked cabinet. All data will be retained in line with University guidelines, following which it will be reviewed, and if relevant, destroyed. **For Visual Research Participants:** Electronic recordings of the interview will be anonymous (no real participant name mentioned). Recordings will be made on a hand held recording device and then transferred to a password protected computer, upon which the original recording will be erased.

Information obtained in this study, including this consent form, will be kept strictly confidential (i.e. will not be passed to others) and anonymous (i.e. individuals and organisations will not be identified *unless this is expressly excluded in the details given above*).

Data obtained through this research may be reproduced and published in a variety of forms and a variety of audiences related to the broad nature of the research detailed above. It will not be used for purposes other than those outlined above without your permission.

Participation is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study on the basis of the above information.

Participant's signature: **Date:**

Researcher's signature: **Date:**

Please keep one copy of this form for your own records.

Appendix 3: Research General Information

Research Project – Potential Participant and General Information

My name is Helen Tracey and I work at Northumbria University. I am undertaking some research into what it is like to be unemployed. You have been given this information because you may be interested in taking part.

Can I participate?
Yes, if you are a man who is aged 50 years and older who is currently unemployed. You may have experienced long-term unemployment and/or previously worked in an industrial or manual role.

What will the research involve?
I would like to speak to people one-to-one about what it is like to be unemployed. This will involve you undertaking a photography project and an interview.

You may see at some of the sessions that you are undertaking with your unemployment project. I am doing this to help me understand what it is like to be unemployed. I may take some notes, but these will not identify anybody (i.e. who said what etc.). If you have any questions about what I am doing, please ask.

What will the photography project involve?
Participation in the photography project is voluntary, and even if you do take part you can leave at any time. However, I hope you will find the project fun and worthwhile. Anything you say or do within the project will be **anonymous**. If you take part you will be given a disposable camera to take photographs. In deciding what to photograph you should think about *what is it like to be you?* and *what is it like to be unemployed?* Examples may include favourite places, or something that reminds you of a particular time.

Photos can depict objects, buildings, landscapes, places. They can be taken indoors, outdoors etc. There are no limits as such (other than see below, “Is there anything I can’t photograph”), but they must mean something to your personally.

Is there anything I can’t photograph?
When you have taken your photographs I will get them developed and provide you with a copy (you will be the first to see them). Then we will discuss your photographs during a one-to-one interview. Therefore, you should be prepared to show and describe your photographs to me, so do not photograph anything that you would feel uncomfortable showing to me.
If your photograph identifies an individual person who is not you, you should ask their permission. I will provide you with a consent form that you will need to ask the person to sign before you take their photograph. Please do not take photographs of children (aged under 18) or vulnerable adults unless you have the responsibility to give permission for their photograph to be taken, i.e. you are the responsible parent or guardian.

What about the quality of the photographs?
It is not a photography competition. If some photos are a little blurry, it doesn't really matter.

What are the photographs for and how will they be used?
The primary use of the photographs will be to aid our discussion during the interview. Because this is a research project, I may like to publish some of your photographs in my research but remember this will anonymous, so nobody will know that you took the photograph unless you want them to. If you do not wish your photographs to be used in this way just let me know. Everything we agree will be written up on a consent form that we will both sign.

How long will it take?
If you decide to take part I will spend around an hour with you discussing the project, answering any questions you have and providing you with a camera. You will then have up to a month to take your photographs. Following that I will organise a time for us to discuss the photographs one-to-one. This will take up to one and a half hours.

What will happen at the one-to-one interview?
I would like you to talk me through the photographs you have taken and explain to me why you took those particular images. I would also like you to explain to me in general what it is like to be unemployed.
I will be voice recording the interviews as I would like to remember everything that we discuss. The recording, which I will then type up, will be anonymous to ensure that any comments made cannot be traced back to you.

Any further questions?
If you would like to take part or have any questions please contact me (Helen)

Telephone: 0191 227 4664
Email: helen.tracey@northumbria.ac.uk

You can also speak to me in person or get in contact with me via your unemployment worker.

Appendix 4: Photography Subject Consent Form

Photography Subject Consent Form

You have been given this form to provide your consent to be photographed as part of a Research Project. The Research Project aims to record what it is like to be unemployed.

It is your choice whether you wish to give consent. If you do wish to give your consent please read the information below about what this means.

By signing this form you are demonstrating your agreement to the following:

- You are aged 18 years or over
- Your photograph will be retained by the researcher (Helen Tracey) for purposes connected to the research project above
- A copy of your photograph will not be passed on to any other party
- Your name will not be connected with your photograph to provide, as far as possible, your anonymity
- Your photograph may appear in publications (Thesis, journal articles, related website) but only in connection with the broad nature of the research detailed above

If you agree to these conditions you should sign **two copies** of this form. Give one copy to the photographer and keep one for your own records.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

If you have any queries about the Research Project please contact Helen Tracey, Senior Lecturer, Northumbria University on 0191 227 4664 or email helen.tracey@northumbria.ac.uk

Consent:

I consent to my photograph being taken and used in line with the above statements.

Full Name:

Date:

Contact Details (e.g. phone number):

Signature:

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study on the basis of the above information.

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